

**HUMAN SEXUALITY: A QUEST  
FOR RELEVANT PERSPECTIVE AND FUNCTIONAL DEFINITION**

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**by  
Ellis Lee Langston  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Statement of the problem. . . . .	2
Purpose . . . . .	5
Limitations. . . . .	6
Methodology . . . . .	8
Summary and preview . . . . .	10
II. AN HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY . . . .	12
Introduction to major issues . . . . .	13
Changes in traditional sources of authority. . . . .	17
Changes in traditional models and images . . . . .	27
Relevant conclusions . . . . .	38
III. THE IMPACT OF THE SECULAR REVOLUTION . . . .	41
Components of the secular revolution . . . . .	41
Effects of the secular revolution . . . . .	54
Relevant conclusions . . . . .	57
IV. RELEVANT DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY AND THE FORMULATION OF AN INTEGRATED DEFINITION	61
Natural dimensions of human sexuality . . . . .	64
Social dimensions of human sexuality . . . . .	67
Religious dimensions of human sexuality. . . . .	71
Psycho-dynamic dimensions of human sexuality . . . .	78
Definitive conclusions . . . . .	81
The formulation of integrated definition . . . . .	83

CHAPTER	PAGE
V. FUNCTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INTEGRATED DEFINITION IN HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT	91
Infancy . . . . .	93
Childhood . . . . .	98
Adolescence . . . . .	104
Adulthood . . . . .	116
VI. CONCLUSION . . . . .	135
Educational . . . . .	135
Pastoral . . . . .	137
Theological . . . . .	140
Social. . . . .	142
Conclusion . . . . .	147
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	150

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Nothing characterizes modern man more than his remarkable lack of perspective. That special intellectual faculty which establishes sense of direction, inter-relation, and continuity has failed in its proper functioning, and in an age of traumatic upheaval and a world of rapid change, it could scarcely be otherwise. Indeed, when what was once thought to be absolute becomes relative, and when former constants become present variables, one readily loses confidence in anyone's ability to know, to differentiate, to judge, and to decide with any competent degree of certitude. As a natural consequence, decisions become very personal and highly subjective. Former understandings are called into question, and when found wanting are discarded. Traditional norms and guidelines lose their authority and disappear. Restrictive barriers dissolve, and then specific subjects and issues must be dealt with on their own terms and examined on the basis of their own essential composition. Thus, a world seeking to come of age always brings with its staggering scientific and technological advances, a social and ethical revolution of monumental proportions. The implications for the Christian faith are, of course, of profound concern and, for better or for worse, bring into question and place under close scrutiny the fundamental foundations upon which the whole edifice of the traditional Christian ethic is built.

## I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the midst of our modern "shaking of the foundations" nothing has become more obviously apparent than the poverty, the deficiency, and the utter inadequacy of our knowledge and understanding of the true nature of human sexuality and its responsible expression. Indeed, from the idle bull-sessions of the ghetto and slum to the intellectual forums of the seminary and university (and vice versa), few topics are more frequently discussed and none less thoroughly understood! Consequently, this dissertation attempts to make some positive contribution toward the clarification of this pressing problem.

The confusion that currently exists is best reflected in the nebulous usage of the word sex itself. It is most frequently used in reference to the biological structures of man's human existence,<sup>1</sup> or to the formative structures of human personality,<sup>2</sup> or to the physical modes of genital expression, or sometimes for all three, or at other times, for any number of their variant combinations.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This meaning and usage is most apparent in medical manuals and is also most common among definitions found in dictionaries. See Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary for examples of such usage. A notable exception in the distinctive use of the word "sex" and "sexuality" is that made in William H. Masters and V. E. Johnson, The Human Sexual Response (Boston: Little, 1966).

<sup>2</sup>Most psychological presentations of the subject under consideration have a remarkable consistent tendency to ignore the biological dimensions of human sexuality.

<sup>3</sup>Almost any of the innumerable "sex" manuals which line the shelves of the newstands will give the reader a number of adequate examples of such variant usage.

Add to these usages the ever-changing idioms of modern slang in which the word sex is used as noun, as verb, and as adjective,<sup>4</sup> and the present confusion is magnified in ever increasing proportions --- so much so that one hardly knows anymore what response will be given on those numerous forms which naively ask for sex without specific clarification of information desired. In such instances, it should come as no surprise that among the armed services personnel, the most frequent divergent response in the blank space after sex is not male or female, but is occasionally. Thus, to some modern men, human sexuality is no more than a simple biological function much like that found in any other animal, controlled by nature and instinct, and to be exercised and expressed accordingly. As a purely physical phenomenon, it is acquired at puberty in the early years of adolescence and reluctantly relinquished at menopause in the late years of middle adulthood. Consequently, sexuality and genital expression are understood to be one and the same. The scene of physical sexual expression is set in the continuum of human living in which the naturalistic libertine seeks unlimited indulgence in this inherent good, while the dualistic ascetic, except in the most confined of personal contexts, seeks total suppression of this intrinsic (though unfortunately necessary) evil.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>For variant slang usage prevalent on the contemporary scene, see Los Angeles Free Press or other underground newspapers.

<sup>5</sup>Human sexuality includes the biological but it is not to be equated with the animal sex instinct whose manifestations are at the command of seasonal rhythms. Woman is not a captive of the oestrus cycle which in other animals makes a sexual intercourse automatic, instinctive and compulsive.



To yet others, human sexuality is understood as being primarily a psycho-social phenomenon, related to if not equated with one's self-awareness, personal identity, and personality development, while at the same time being subject to and determined by one's education, environment, and socialization processes. As such, human sexuality is thought to be entirely neutral but diversely pervertible; completely predictable but widely variational.<sup>6</sup>

No doubt each of these positions is right to a certain extent, and these are but a few of the many divergent interpretations of human sexuality presently flooding or converging upon the modern contemporary scene. Needless to say, at the present time there is no emergent consensus of opinion nor are there any prospects for one to emerge in the immediate future. In fact, few attempts to arrive at a creative synthesis of all of the inter-related perspectives yet have been made. Consequently, many pertinent questions remain unanswered, destined to plague and perplex us all until they find their just resolve. Questions such as: Is human sexuality distinctively different from the sexuality of other animals? If so, what is its purpose? How does human sexuality find responsible expression? Is there a truly Christian perspective? What is its relation to man's total existence? What are its social as well as its personal dimensions?

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<sup>6</sup> A one-sided emphasis upon the psycho-social dimensions of human sexuality neglects the bio-physical inheritance of man, and does not take seriously the inter-relatedness of the two.

## II. PURPOSE

These questions and their like, make it abundantly clear that definition and explication, understanding and expression are no simple matters but are highly complex issues demanding careful deliberation and critical consideration. In most cases, yesterday's answers and traditional guidelines are no longer sufficient or at the least are of nominal assistance in a world where human situations are vastly different from anything we have ever known before. Substantiated by the radical discrepancy that exists between traditional standards and contemporary practices, this modern dilemma has found rootage in the breakdown of former religious and societal authority and has gained its growth and vitality from the rise of individualistic contextualism. Rebelling against the lop-sided collectivistic social emphasis of an archaic, outmoded, legalistic system of a past era, the pendulum of perspective has been swung to the opposite extreme resulting in a furious dither of personal proposals and normless speculations, the new concepts living in co-existence with the old and all of their variational hybrids. Confusion has been the inevitable result. This chaotic ambiguity of the present time with all of its rampant pluralism is most adequately characterized by Harvey Cox when he writes:

The sexual scene here in North America can best be described as a confused stage filled with fragments of sets and scattered with pieces of discarded costumes. In various corners of the stage more or less completely costumed actors are boldly strutting and soliloquizing, but what they are saying can scarcely be heard in the din. In the area near the right wing, a group of elderly courtesans in Puritan and Victorian dress is engaged in a highly ritualized comedy of manners. In the section near the pit, a crowd of beatniks and hipsters

is dancing and contorting to loud sensuous music. At the center rear an elaborate contest is in progress in which dozens of indistinguishable girls in totally identical bathing suits and make-up are competing for the title of Miss Dairy Queen of the Year. On still another section a well-developed young lady in a bunny costume is serving milk in huge bottles with rubber nipples to a crowd of wide-eyed young men in impeccably styled clothing. But on most of the stage there is anarchy.<sup>7</sup>

Amid this drastic fragmentation of man and this compartmentalization of human life, the task of the Christian faith is readily apparent. It must seek to bring order out of chaos. It must seek to bring perspective back into focus. It must seek to bring together again that unique unity to be found in man's diversity as a multi-dimensional entity.<sup>8</sup> It must seek to help modern man clarify the true meaning and nature of his human sexuality and its responsible expression. This dissertation has been written with those purposes in mind.

### III. LIMITATIONS

Obviously, there are many cross-currents which flow into this contemporary river of concern and it would be impossible to attempt to fully explore all of the tributaries which contribute to the

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<sup>7</sup> John Charles Wynn (ed.) Sex, Family and Society in Theological Focus (New York: Association Press, 1966), p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> Gestalt theories of development have convincingly demonstrated that there is a unity in the midst of man's diversity.

complexity of its basin and empty their contents into the depths of its waterway. Thus, this dissertation does not attempt to cover the whole waterfront, but limits itself to three important considerations. It seeks first to develop historical and sociological perspective concerning the present dilemma, and examines the secular revolution, and attempts to explain how we got where we are now. Secondly, this dissertation seeks to examine the most important dimensional components of human sexuality and attempts to incorporate them into an integrated definition. Finally, this dissertation seeks to investigate the consequences of this definition's functional application and attempts to explicate its implications in terms of ministry. In other words, this dissertation attempts to deal honestly and responsibly with the problems of perspective, definition, and application. It is, in fact, a quest for a functional Christian model as regards the true nature and expression of human sexuality.

The subject with which this dissertation concerns itself is a highly complex issue about which there is, at the present time, no general consensus of opinion. This writer, therefore, does not even pretend to deal with all of the variant problems involved. He rather, attempts to lift up relevant issues, to expose the present areas of confusion, and to confront contemporary man with the complex nature of his human sexuality. The definition which is formulated in no way proposes to be a cure-all for all of society's sexual ills, nor is it held up to be a super solution of all of contemporary man's sexual "hang-ups." In fact, the delicate problem of sexual deviation about which to date there is so little reliable information could scarcely be responsibly dealt with at all, although obvious implications in definitive applications could not be ignored. The writer, however, fully acknowledges his limitations and makes

no claim to be experte in such complex matters, nor does he assume to be well-versed in the delicate intracacies of biology, psychology, or sociology per se. Rather, he works from a general knowledge of all three, and from a plodding logic of experience and observation through which every man must at sometime come to view himself and the world about him lest all of his scientific discoveries be left for naught. Of course, all of us as men operate from within the context of our own mindset and peer out at the world from within the fish bowl of our own understandings and educational training. This writer operates out of an academic influence oriented toward the pastoral ministry, and consequently, his approach to the subject under consideration tends to place more emphasis upon its pragmatic aspects than upon its theoretical bases. Therefore, the stance of the dissertation in all probability is due to the resultant influence of this writer's pastoral theological orientation. Its intent is to present a step by step logical progression, or, if you please, a "stenographic form of thinking out loud" in a just consideration of the problem at hand.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

The dissertation itself has grown out of a project of extensive reading and concentrated study. It is, in fact, an honest personal attempt to appraise and digest a large volume of contemporary material relating to the nature of human sexuality. It was, by necessity and intention, selective, designed to encompass a broad survey of the contemporary scene, bringing into consideration a large number of differing positions, while developing a wide range of exposure to some of the more definitive works of men whose

opinions and scholarship are highly respected in their academic competence. The dissertation itself makes no attempt to restate, summarize, explicate, or criticize those various positions, although the writer has certainly read and examined them with an objectively critical eye. Rather, in this project, the writer attempts to pound out a position of his own, freely appropriating those insights and understandings which he has found to be most meaningful and particularly helpful.

As regards the mechanics of the dissertation, it is important to note that the term sex is completely discarded. This has been done in an attempt to avoid the word's all too frequent ambiguous meaning and ambivalent use, too often limited in scope and equated with references of genital expression, technicalities of gender, or factors of bio-physical heredity. Its use has also been avoided as a matter of personal discipline so as to clarify in the writer's own mind, his own usage and choice of words. In place of the former term, this dissertation uses the word sexuality in its broadest possible context and is intended to mean both the given and the developmental factors of dissimilarity which distinguish male and female from one another. The word is not meant to include nor to be equated with any culturally defined roles or societally imposed characteristics of masculinity or femininity, e.g. how one crosses his legs. When the word sex is used, it will always be in reference to physical modes of genital expression. When the word sex is used in direct quotations, its meaning will be clarified in parentheses immediately thereafter unless the meaning is already abundantly clear. Needless to say, this attempt to distinguish between the meanings of sex and sexuality is a feat which even the best of writers

have not been able to accomplish and whether or not this writer is able to do so with any reasonable measure of success will be disclosed and confirmed only by the pages that follow.

## V. SUMMARY AND PREVIEW

In summary then, it can be said that this dissertation deals with the question of human sexuality, its nature and its responsible expression. It is, therefore, nothing less than an adventure in human self understanding, presented in the form of a logical progression of inter-related perspectives. It seeks to remain true to the central motifs of the Christian faith while appropriating pertinent truths of the modern social and behavioral sciences. Chapter Two is concerned with historical and sociological perspective, while Chapter Three examines prominent factors of modern secularization which have decisively shaped and molded our present sexual understandings and modes of expression. Chapter Four examines the essential constitutive dimensions of human sexuality and attempts, by means of creative synthesis, to arrive at a realistic as well as relevant definitive understanding of human sexuality. Chapter Five is concerned with how that understanding functions and what are its practical implications for the individual and the local church in terms of ministry.

Needless to say, the issue at hand is far more complex than this writer ever imagined and its complications are not easily resolved. Consequently, the resultant personal enlightenment which has come from this extensive project has been well worth the effort

expended in its preparation. If it, likewise, serves to expand the horizons of those who expose themselves to its contents, it will have more than served its academic purpose.



## CHAPTER II

### AN HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY

We live in a world of radical change and continuous flux. In a matter of a few short years our predominantly rural, agricultural nation has become the most highly developed industrialized urban nation in the world. Almost overnight the United States has been transformed into a thriving metropolitan society whose social, cultural, and economic health is measured by the heartbeat of the city. Our society is now geared to production and an ever expanding economy while our lives are directed and controlled by ever broadening horizons of our scientific knowledge. Science now reigns supreme and rules as the God of Progress, and we are at its call and also at its mercy. Through its power, man seeks to harness the forces of nature and thereby to shape his own destiny --- to control the world and thereby to conquer the universe. With the tools of industry and technology placed in his hands by the findings of science, man's accumulated knowledge now doubles every fifteen years as discovery follows discovery at an ever accelerating pace of proliferation --- indeed, so fast that many science books are outdated before they can be printed. Ours is a brave new world --- a world whose only sure consonant and constancy of character is change.

In such a world, only an understanding and an appreciation of the historical and sociological dynamics of the past as well as the present can restore to man a meaningful dimension of relevant perspective, for in a scientific age, every facet of human existence

is brought under observation, is scrutinized, and is always made subordinate to the pragmatic march of progress. The traditional structures and the moral norms of society are not exceptions. In a world where human situations are vastly different from anything that we have ever known before, many of yesterday's understandings and traditional guidelines, when called into question, no longer hold true or, at least, are of nominal value and limited assistance in modern application. They must prove their worth or be discarded and generally rejected or disregarded and generally ignored. Such scrutinization and its resultant social change often brings with it a dissolution of faith in traditional sources of authority and models of identity. Consequently, a plethora of confusing and contradictory ones arise to coexist with the former, until at last some emergent consensus of opinion appears or some new source of authority and identity establishes itself and its primacy over all of the others.

## I. INTRODUCTION TO MAJOR ISSUES

The sexual revolution. Today, many of the traditional social and moral absolutes which were once thought to be sacrosanct and invulnerable to any questions are now open to serious challenge. This is particularly true in regard to our traditional social and moral understandings of human sexuality. In fact, today

for the first time in our history as a nation,  
the individual is confronted with an array of  
competing value systems of sex\* ranging

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\* Sex is used here in reference to behavioral patterns of genital sexual expression.

from the rigid, dogmatic, and intolerant philosophy that sees all sex as basically sinful to the latest variations of the current "fun morality."<sup>1</sup>

We are in the midst of a sexual revolution. What that revolution entails, however, is a highly debated question. Some assert that astonishing changes in sexual mores have been taking place in our culture, and that there is no sign that the pace is abating. According to their reports, promiscuous sexual intercourse is rampant among the young, homosexuality is on the sharp rise, and extra-marital coitus among adults abounds with ever increasing frequency. Venereal disease they assert, has reached epidemic proportions while the rate of illegitimacy is at an all time high. An example of such alarming assertions is found in sociologist Max Lerner's introduction to Gael Greene's book, Sex and The College Girl (New York: Dial Press, 1964), where he affirms that the world of the campus today is one of

motels, parked cars, drive-in movies, fraternity houses, dormitory rooms during "parietal hours," apartments loaned for the weekend. . . . It is a world of buzzing booming internal confusion, of sex without bed, of bed without love, of hedonism without joy.<sup>2</sup>

Proponents of such beliefs (most often undocumented authoritatively) were recently satirized by comedian Bob Hope when he quipped, "They talk as if pre-marital sex is universal, extra-marital sex, predominant, and post-marital sex, non-existent."

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<sup>1</sup>Isadore Rubin and Lester Kirkendall, Sex in The Adolescent Years (New York: Association Press, 1968), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

Such well known men as John H. Gagnon, research director at the Kinsey Institute for Sex Research, Isadore Rubin, editor of Sexology, and Lester Kirkendall, Oregon State University professor and noted research scientist, all emphatically contend that no basic changes in behavioral patterns have occurred since the publication of the first Kinsey Report some twenty years ago, and that to date there is no truly reliable body of evidence to indicate any significant fluctuation in the facts and figures revealed therein. It is their contention that the

real revolution that has occurred is not so much in behavior as in the openness that has replaced much --- but by no means all --- of our traditional "hush and pretend" about sex and in the considerable changes that have taken place in sexual attitudes. These changes are very important, but they in no way add up to the popular concept of the tremendous change in behavior and morals that has supposedly taken place since the publication of the Kinsey Reports in 1948 and 1953. This is the carefully reasoned conclusion of those experts who have made the most careful study of sexual patterns since the revelations of the first Kinsey Report.<sup>3</sup>

The substantial change in attitude. In spite of the facts, most people honestly believe that a sexual revolution has occurred. Thus, the sexual revolution to which they refer must be more one of attitude and meaning than one of behavior and action. Today there is unquestionably a more openly free attitude toward human sexuality and its variant modes of expression than ever before. Once a

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

private matter, it has now become a topic of public discussion. In fact, never before in our history or in the history of any other country has there been so much talk about sex and sexuality --- in our colleges, in our mass communications media, in our pulpits, in our laboratories, in our homes, and in our public education classrooms. No doubt, we are in the midst of a radical re-definition of our former understandings of human sexuality and its meaning for our lives in this day and time. Whether or not this can be called a sexual revolution, however, is a matter of personal opinion and a subject of public debate. If it is a sexual revolution, it is either the second one we have experienced since the turn of the century, or it is a continuation or perhaps even the consummating grand finale of a production begun more than forty years ago. We may laugh at Jonathan Winter's impersonation of a promiscuous lady named Grannie Maude Frickard, but it should serve also to remind us that the first sexual revolution in fact was initiated by our grandmothers --- a revolution which was begun by the "flaming youth" of the roaring twenties --- a revolution which was continued and extended by our parents of the fabulous forties --- a revolution which has now found further expression in the riotous youth of the sizzling sixties. Perhaps our parents and our grandparents who surprisingly respond to the so-called sexual revolution with a glib, "here we go again!" can rightly do so with more candor and more validity than we should like to admit. Joseph Fletcher seems to confirm this appraisal when he writes:

If we had to check off a point in modern times when the sex revolution started, first in practice but only slowly and reluctantly in thought, I would set it at the First World War. Since then

there has been a phenomenal increase of aphrodisiac literature, visual and verbal, as well as informational materials. We have seen an unprecedented freedom of expression orally as well as in print, both in ordinary conversation and in the mass media. . . .<sup>4</sup>

One grandfather most aptly expressed the change when he remarked, "The young people don't act any different today from what we did when we were their age. They just feel free to talk about it more." The change that has occurred then, be it revolution, continuation, or consummation is one of radical new openness to the topic --- one of the increased mental and emotional acceptance --- one of realistic redefinition based on new knowledge and new frankness --- one of altered attitudes which reflect a definite shift from sexual denial to sexual affirmation.

The question which inevitably arises after such assertions is as follows: What brought about these changes and why did they occur?

## II. CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

Before the rise of modern science the family and religion were the major dominant sources of authority over all acceptable understandings of human sexuality. They had little or no competition and consequently, there was a general consensus of opinion in regard to the nature of human sexuality and the times and places and conditions for its proper physical expression. It was strictly a

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<sup>4</sup>Joseph Fletcher, Moral Responsibility (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967, p. 127.

private activity between a man and a woman, to be expressed exclusively in marriage for the procreation of children. No other expressions were sanctioned publicly, and any expressed outside these limitations were considered sinful, to be avoided at all cost and under all circumstances.

Changes in religious authority. With the rise of modern science and the acceptance of its critical empirical method of investigation, the claims of religion were subjected to the same scrutiny as all other areas of human existence. Religious truths and assertions which could not stand up under the questioning and comparative findings of science were rightly rejected and readily discarded. Particularly was this true when the disciplines of anthropology, biology, and psychology came into their own prime and prominence, and it became apparent that the blame for much of the current distortion, confusion, and guilt regarding human sexuality must be borne by the church. Consequently, modern science did not hesitate to shatter religion's dark and dreary delusions about human sexuality, rejecting wholeheartedly its narrow and negative views which were not only scientifically false but also tragically incomplete. With such refutation and warranted rejection of the church's historical position came likewise a deliberate and general disregard for the essential truths of the Christian faith which were quite mistakenly equated with their institutionalized modes of expression. Erosion and collapse of religious credibility were the inevitable results and the high fences of Puritan morality and Victorian prohibitions which had imprisoned man's sexual understandings and expressions for so long were torn down, at least in practice, if not in principle.

The rise of modern science undercut religious authority and its credibility also in other ways. The scientific and systematic study of comparative cultures proved that what was once considered by individuals to be universally the best possible arrangement because of its predominance in their own culture could be handled very differently and sometimes even better and more effectively in other cultures. The same was true of studies in comparative religions.

No student of religion can fail to recognize that all religions in all cultures, from the primitive to the civilized, have drawn definite connections between man's religious self-evaluations --- religious understandings of his world --- and his sexuality and sexual expression.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, comparative studies of other religions have brought a more positive approval and a more pleasant appreciation of the alternatives to the traditional Judeo-Christian affirmations regarding human sexuality. Thus, this wide-spread knowledge of the cultural and religious differences and alternatives available in the world has tended to make persons less sure of their own source of authority and their own traditional understandings and affirmations. In fact, the scientific method of critical investigation and analysis insists that man find out for himself objectively and empirically what his own personal understandings and limitations are to be. Science encourages each man to decide for himself, and in an age when neither God nor religion can be subjected to and affirmed by the standards of empirical evidence and analytic scrutiny, both lose

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<sup>5</sup>Hans Hofmann, Sex Incorporated (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 20.



their validity and influence in the lives of many people. Consequently not only are the attitudes and positions of the Judeo-Christian religion challenged constantly, "they are often deliberately ignored in favor of an amoral attempt at being scientific."<sup>6</sup>

The scientific method and climate of our culture have not been solely responsible for the leveling of religious authority in America. Religious pluralism has also played a principal part, particularly among protestants. There is no official protestant position set forth in any area of faith and morals. Protestantism has no pope and there are no definitive encyclicals on sex and marriage. There are no Vatican Councils to speak with decisive authority for all among the protestant fold. The World Council of Churches does have commissions which issue recommendations and the National Council of Churches often releases study reports and position papers, but in a very real sense, such documents actually represent only the opinions of those who write them. They have no authority and are binding on member churches only as they voluntarily assent to the sentiments expressed. Consequently, it is impossible to speak of the protestant position on any issue.<sup>7</sup> Each denomination --- each sect --- and each group has its own position and, because of our national heritage of religious freedom, each individual churchman reserves the right to observe some standards and to ignore others, regardless of their doctrinal importance. In other words, with freedom of religion has also come the right of

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<sup>6</sup> John J. / Mary P. Ryan, Love and Sexuality (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> William Cole, Sex in Christianity and Psycho-analysis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 164.

freedom from religion. "Data abound on the limited influence that ecclesiastical prose bears upon the personal decisions, choices, and behavior patterns of the every-day layman."<sup>8</sup> Contemporary denominational resolutions and pronouncements are limited in appeal and response even among Roman Catholics, as the recent birth control controversy most effectively confirms. The same is true of interfaith marriage, divorce, and contraception, despite stern warnings and pronouncements against them. The noted author and outstanding professor of family relations, Dr. John C. Wynn writes,

For all of the annual resolutions of church synods and conventions that admonish families to specific modes of conduct, we know that such counsels of perfection are honored and observed most often in the breach than in the observance.<sup>9</sup>

Because religious pluralism reflects the deep conviction that every man should be free to worship God as he chooses, American soil is hardly the ground out of which one might expect a monolithic religious authority to rise to speak definitively to and for all citizens of the United States.<sup>10</sup> To be sure, a general consensus of opinion existed in regard to human sexuality and its modes of physical expression to a wide extent in former times due to the common historical "hang-ups" of a Puritan and Victorian past, but such a common understanding quickly dissolved as individuals within the

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<sup>8</sup> John Charles Wynn (ed.) Sex, Family, and Society in Theological Focus (New York: Association Press, 1966), p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Hofmann, op. cit., p. 24.

church and outside the church called these previous positions into question. A host of widely divergent viewpoints has been the result.

Small wonder then that pewholders feel directionless when from one pulpit they hear sexual standards discussed so euphemistically that they are unsure just what the subject is and from another they hear an appreciative condensation of Fanny Hill: The Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure.<sup>11</sup>

Two other factors have also played an important part in the breakdown of traditional religious authority which need to be briefly mentioned. The first is the fact that the church's traditional position in regard to human sexuality has been quite negative in tone and expression --- so much so that most people know more about what the church is against than what it is for, much less why. In an age of rebellion against authority, this dogmatic approach is destined to fail even if all of its tenets are found to be scientifically sound for there is more to authority than truth of fact. Secondly, the church has often majored upon this one aspect of life at the expense of more pressing social problems, or at least, to the tragic neglect and exclusion of urgent ethical matters of equal importance and preponderance. The result has been a growing personal lack of respect and an increasing social subordination of the church's traditional authority. Thus, we can assert with a confident degree of certitude that the scientific method, religious pluralism, and social subordination have presently deprived the Judeo-Christian authority of its power to shape or regulate contemporary understandings of human sexuality and its physical modes of expression.

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<sup>11</sup>Wynn, op. cit., p. 28.

Changes in familial authority. For centuries the church has been the guardian of the family. It is not surprising then, that the breakdown of religious authority has been accompanied by a breakdown in the traditional sources of authority in the family. It cannot be pretended that the family has escaped secularization any more than has religion. It has breathed the same air of the times and has lived in the same locale and has experienced the same traumatic forces as the church. Consequently, it has experienced much the same fate. The pangs of modern science, pluralism, and social subordination have been painfully felt by the family, and they have subsequently taken their toll.

Perhaps no other social institution has been so profoundly affected, both internally and externally, by the rise of modern science as has the family. Gone are the days of its rural independence and self-sufficiency, and its definitive structures and exclusive domains of authority are now long passed. As a basic economic unit composed of husband, wife, and children and quite often surrounded by a host of kith and kin, the welfare of the family in more traditional times was dependent upon the skills and efficiency of its several members. As such, the father was the unchallenged and unquestioned head of the household. He was the president of the family's business and the mayor of his family's affairs. Geographical isolation developed within the family unit a sense of mutual interdependence and reinforced the uniformity of its beliefs, ideals, and basic attitudes. The family's contact with the outside world was generally quite limited and usually quite restricted, being filtered exclusively through the lenses of those agencies with which the family had formed an educational and social alliance, namely the church and the school.

The staggering transformation of that world-view, its social structures, and its sources of authority which was wrought by the tools and technology of modern science is almost beyond comprehension. Its impact had profound implications and its consequences are far too numerous for adequate explication here. Perhaps it will be sufficient simply to say that pulled by its roots from its agrarian soil, the family has been transplanted into a metropolitan environment which is highly mechanized, highly organized, and highly specialized. The father no longer reigns and rules supreme over all of the family affairs. Rather, he is now one among equals where tasks and roles are assigned according to need and not tradition. There is now a radical separation between home and family on the one hand and work and livelihood on the other. The care and education of children, no longer strictly a family responsibility, has become a matter of community concern --- so much that by the time a child of today is three or four years of age, he probably is spending a significant and ever increasing length of time outside the home in the company and care of adults and peers who are not members of his family. The traditional family alliance with the school consequently has significantly increased, while its alliance with the church has steadily decreased. Once the only definitive source of authority outside the family circle, more and more religion has become a private affair, competing with other social groups for a claim on the family's time and loyalty but having little if any real influence upon the essential functions of its daily life.

Again, for better or for worse, the effects of modern science have directly and indirectly left their marks upon our lives.<sup>12</sup>

Pluralism has also had its effect upon the traditional sources of authority in the family. Mass communication and public educational opportunities now expose every child to an ever expanding horizon of ideas, beliefs, and attitudes. Thus, by the time a child reaches his teens, the primary agent of socialization has passed from the family to the peer group and the mass media peer group surrogates.<sup>13</sup> Familial influence decreases as the child advances in age and exposure; and what little time is spent together as a family generally, does not help a child sort out specific alternatives among the host of social choices with which he has been confronted. The child of today receives relatively little guidance from his family. This is primarily because the parents themselves are not sure what kind of authority they should assert. The influence of developmental psychology and its multiple variations has quite often shattered parental confidence as they have sought to avoid stifling their child's creativity, distorting his personality, or implanting inferiority complexes. Consequently, the phenomenon of "scientific child rearing" has ushered in an age of ambiguity for parents and an atmosphere of permissiveness for their children. In the absence of authoritarian directives most parents have managed to convey the traditional understandings of human sexuality and its acceptable modes of physical expression to their child,

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<sup>12</sup>See related chapters of Gibson Winter, Love and Conflict (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958); Frederick Allen, Only Yesterday, (New York: Harper & Row, 1931); and Harvey Wish, Society and Thought in Modern America (New York: McKay, 1962).

<sup>13</sup>See Edgar Z. Friedenberg, The Vanishing Adolescent (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).

though these standards do not always coincide with their own practices. It is not surprising then that most children do not accept these standards without question. In fact, not only do they question the validity of their parents' authority in these matters, they are also well aware of the discrepancy that exists between what is preached and what is practiced. It should be expected then, that in the midst of ambiguity and contradiction, young people of today seek to experiment and compare notes with their peers and together they search for their own understandings of human sexuality. Thus, pluralism and social subordination have become active catalysts in the breakdown of traditional authority in the family.

The social subordination of the family, however, has found its fullest expression in the rise of an entirely new phenomenon known by sociologists as a youth sub-culture. With forty per cent of our nation's total population being under twenty-five years of age, youth today have come to wield a tremendous influence upon the contemporary life style of our whole country. A large part of our national industry caters to their needs, their wants, and their desires, as that forty per cent possesses an annual buying power of over ten and one half billion dollars. It is not surprising then that youth determine the hair and clothes styles, their tastes dictate the trends of entertainment, the popular music becomes a product of their expressions, and the modern dances and current vernacular themes tend to become symbolic reflections of their sub-culture. Youth culture has come into its own and is now one of the dominant forces in all areas of American social and cultural life. It has its own bases of power, its own standards of judgment, its own codes of conduct, its own customs of language, and its own distinctive sources

of authority. Consequently, in an age when the peer group is the primary agent of socialization, the authority of the family is socially subordinate to that of the youth sub-culture. This is most especially true when it comes to understandings of human sexuality and the particulars of its physical expression.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, we conclude that because of the effects of modern science, pluralism, and social subordination, traditional sources of authority such as God and parents, religion and family have lost much of their influence upon the lives of contemporary men, while formerly unknown sources of authority such as public education, peer groups, mass media, and even popular opinion polls have come to wield immense power over us all. In short, we sense with a great deal of apprehension a definite breakdown and a decided shift away from clearly established and unquestionably respected sources of authority. No where has the impact of this breakdown and shift been more apparent than in man's search for an adequate understanding of human sexuality.

### III. CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL MODELS AND IMAGES

Whenever traditional sources of authority break down, traditional images and models topple too, for a crisis in authority is always accompanied by a crisis in identity. Two of the more profound of the changes that have resulted in decisive mutations or at

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<sup>14</sup>See Kenneth Keniston, The Uncommitted (New York: Delta, 1960), and J. L. Simmons and Barry Winograd, It's Happening (Santa Barbara: Marc-Laird, 1966).



least dramatic metamorphoses in our traditional understandings of human sexuality have been the dissolution of a dualistic concept of man and the emancipation of woman.

Dissolution of the dualistic concept of man. The dissection of the nature of man has been so much a part of all of history that one scarcely knows where it began. From ancient mythology to modern medicine the basic unity of man's nature has been readily and repeatedly torn assunder; and while the truly biblical view of man affirms his multi-dimensional unity,<sup>15</sup> to say the least, it would be rather presumptuous to ignore the church's protective perversion which divided the material world from the spiritual world and thus severed man's body from his soul. When the body is thought to be inferior to the soul, the negation and inevitable condemnation of human sexuality is a natural eventuality. "The original impetus for such a negative attitude seems to have come from outside Christianity, from the Stoics and others disgusted with the licentiousness of their times."<sup>16</sup> Its philosophical origin no doubt can be traced to the Platonian school of thought, but its heretical infiltration into the Christian church's proclamation of the faith had its origin in a basic misunderstanding of the writings of Paul. Unfortunately for the historical Christian church and the world it influenced, the Greek terminology which was used by Paul to

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<sup>15</sup>See the works of William Cole, Helmut Thielicke, and Otto Piper for exegesis and interesting contrasts of scholastic biblical interpretations of the subject under consideration.

<sup>16</sup>Ryan, op. cit., p. 3

interpret the Gospel to the gentiles in a vernacular that was familiar to them, in the apostle's absence, were accepted as translinear equivalents of what were originally Hebraic ideas and concepts. Consequently, it was not long before they were understood exclusively in the fullness of their Hellenistic meanings, backgrounds, and traditions; and the dualistic concept was accepted by the succeeding generations as the Christian position.<sup>17</sup>

The official translation of the Old Testament into Greek (the Septuagint) and the Platonic synthesis of Christian thought which reached its fullest and most brilliant expression in the writings of Saint Augustine made the adoption of the dualistic concept of the nature of man complete and secure. The adoption of the Platonic view of man and the universe was undoubtedly an attempt to explain the perplexing problem of the presence of sin and evil in a world which God had made. Consequently, the division of man into body and soul and of the world into matter and spirit seemed to offer a logical solution to that problem. Unfortunately, it also created problems of more tragic consequences than those that were posed by the former. When the implications of dividing the created order of the world into components of good and evil are followed to their natural and logical conclusions, gnosticism is the inevitable end result. Thus, this heretical gnostic dualism in its more radical forms was soundly refuted by the early church councils but was allowed to continue in its more modified versions, particularly in regard to the nature of man.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>See John Noonon, Contraception (New York: Mentor-Omega, 1967).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

Needless to say, when the body is believed to be inherently inferior to the soul and somehow basically in opposition to it, it is hardly possible to be positive about human sexuality. Rather, human sexuality under such circumstances, is most often interpreted as being an unfortunate but necessary aspect of human nature, not only basically inferior in order, but when unrepressed is primarily the most prolific source of man's sin. Thus we have Saint Augustine's tragic interpretation of the Fall and the development of his doctrine of original sin; and thus, Paul's use of the Greek word "flesh" (originally meaning a summary of man's condition when estranged from God) came to have sexual overtones and sensual connotations.<sup>19</sup> Sexual abstinence and celibacy were thereby elevated to a higher status than marriage and the holy estate of matrimony became a less desirable and less perfect way of life, reserved for those who could not control their "carnal" passions. Throughout the history of the Christian church these beliefs continued to persist and to grow in intensity, reaching their fullest expressions in asceticism and the rise of monastic orders. Not until the Protestant Reformation were their bases questioned and many of their conclusions firmly denied as being in basic opposition to the biblical understanding of the true nature of man.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>See the works of William Cole and Helmut Thielicke for exegetical verification.

<sup>20</sup>For detailed historical development of subject see Cole, op. cit., also see Wynn, op. cit., chap. 3.

"Under the influence of the reformation, Christianity began to move away from an austere augustinian view of sex and moved toward an acceptance of pleasure in sex as a positive good."<sup>21</sup> The ebb tide unfortunately had scarcely begun before the philosophy of Descartes opened again the flood gates of anthropological dualism allowing the church, now reinforced by a Puritan code of ethics, to take up once again the care of man's soul and the negative repression of his sexual nature. Largely ignoring the realms of the body and the physical aspects of matter, the church left these concerns exclusively in the hands of the secular sciences. Consequently, a century later, when Charles Darwin introduced his Origin of Species, the theory of evolution, and naturalistic determinism, the church found itself in a very precarious position, and the credibility of its affirmations about the primary importance of man's soul over his body were profoundly challenged and called into serious question. The rise of liberalism and the "Social Gospel" was the church's attempt to resolve that conflict, but an equilibrium had scarcely begun to emerge when the balance was shattered by the discoveries of Freud. Freudian psychology as it developed and was popularly understood seemed to extend the "corruption" of man's sexuality into all areas of his human existence and it was not long before "the belief spread that repression, not license was the great evil, and that sexual matters belonged in the realm of science, not morals."<sup>22</sup> Consequently, the traditional

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<sup>21</sup>"The Second Sexual Revolution," Time, LXXXIII (January 24, 1964), 56.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

dualistic concept of man was rejected and its anti-sexual connotations scientifically refuted. Thereby man came to be viewed as basically a sexual being like any other animal, and the prevailing Puritan ethic, reinforced by Victorian prudery and puerilence, was brought under heavy attack. The rise of biblical criticism and its growing acceptance and influence, likewise, added impetus to that decline, while form criticism and the new hermeneutic have only more recently come to offer the hope of dealing the prevailing dualistic concept of man in the church its final death blow. In fact, it has only been through the more recent affirmations of biblical scholarship insisting upon the basic unity of man as the only true biblical understanding and the subsequent demand for the church to return to the original and essential truths of its faith that the church has been given a new opportunity to redeem the tragedies of its past by helping to transform the confusion of the present time, particularly as regards the true nature of human sexuality.<sup>23</sup> Modern science has also come to this unitive conclusion in more recent times although for a while it seemed to reaffirm the traditional dualistic concept of man in its insistence upon distinctly separating the basic inter-relational connections between biology and psychology, between mental and physical health, and between the treatment of the mind and the treatment of the body. The emergence of new scientific evidence, however, unequivocally confirmed their inter-relatedness and inherent

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<sup>23</sup>See the works of William Cole, Helmut Thielicke, and Otto Piper for detailed documentation.

inter-action of their various components with the other dimensions of man's nature.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, science, along with modern religion has now come to understand man as being a multi-dimensional unity. The impact of that realization has not yet fully been felt nor experienced in its entirety, but its implications for the future are phenomenal. Thus, having at last reached the same basic conclusions, the contemporary breakdown of the traditional dualistic concept of man has been the compositly compounded influence of both science and religion. The breakdown of our traditional understandings of human sexuality has quite naturally followed and the resultant vacuum produced by the collapse of these images is presently filled only with chaotic ambiguity within which no satisfactory attempts have yet been made toward arriving at a creative synthesis of inter-related perspectives. It is not surprising then that the present contemporary scene is a miasma of contradiction and confusion.

The emancipation of woman. If one doubts that a tremendous change has occurred in the traditional status of woman, all one need do is take a quick glimpse at Charles Schulz's prophetic comic strip, Peanuts and there listen in on the revealing hopes and aspirations of Lucy, the cool and deliberately calculating paragon of feminine pride and arrogance, who dreams of one day becoming the first woman president of the United States and then Queen of the

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<sup>24</sup>Gestalt theories of development have convincingly demonstrated that there is a unity in the midst of man's diversity. In more recent times the works of Viktor Frankl have most competently revealed and verified this fact of inter-related functions. See also the works of Merleau-Ponty.

World. Laugh though we may, the fact that such a possibility in reality exists today reveals not simply a dramatic shift but rather a decisive change from that day a century ago when woman was regarded as a second rate citizen and was allotted a definitely inferior status than that of man. Woman has now "come of age," and after many long centuries of discreet but quite obvious discrimination, she has at long last become man's equal in almost every field of endeavor. That undeniable change began its gradual evolution when the Christian faith elevated woman's status from that of masculine property and familial real estate to one of spiritual equality before God.<sup>25</sup> This elevation in and of itself was no insignificant matter, but the writings of Paul unequivocally confirm that in the life of the early church, the traditional assumption of woman's social inferiority was maintained in tact and continued without serious challenge. Indeed, that woman was equal in sin and in grace when she stood before God seemed in no way to affirm her equality when she stood before man! Those implications were to take two thousand more years before they were to be realized and subsequently fulfilled. To be sure, the rise of romantic love in the Renaissance and the redemption of marriage in the Protestant Reformation, no doubt gave some added impetus to woman's quest for emancipation and personal dignity, but the real break did not come until the latter half of the nineteenth century when the first

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<sup>25</sup>See Helmut Thielicke, The Ethics of Sex (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), chapter 1. For quick overview see relevant terms in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962).

impact of the Industrial Revolution began to make itself known and felt. As more and more the inventive genius of man removed the drudgeries of housekeeping and homemaking from the domestic domain of woman, the traditional mother and housewife found more time and more freedom to live her own life and to do those things she had always wanted to do. Many of the more educated women took jobs teaching school while others sought clerical employment in the larger department stores. The less educated found new opportunities on the assembly lines in the factories while others sought sales positions in merchandising businesses or accepted jobs in new fields of employment created at an ever accelerated pace by the rapid growth of the manufacturing industry. The perfection and manufacture of the typewriter alone drastically expanded the number of jobs available to women in professions and places of business previously completely closed to their presence much less open to the possibility of their employment.

These new vocational opportunities generated by the impact of the Industrial Revolution and an expanding economy were quite naturally accompanied by the need for special training and the demand for higher education. Consequently, special training schools and colleges were forced to open their doors to women. From these institutions "the new woman" emerged with the educational skills and intellectual proficiency to unlock a countless number of new doors leading to all kinds of employment opportunities and eventually to unlock the doors leading to every profession available to man.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>See Edward M. Schur (ed.) The Family and the Sexual Revolution (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), part II, and also related chapters in Wish, op. cit.



With the job --- or at least the sense that the job was a possibility --- came a feeling of comparative economic independence. With the feeling of economic independence came a slackening of husbandly and parental authority. More and more women at last were being freed to live their own lives.<sup>27</sup>

Homemakers who chose not to seek employment outside the home now found time to devote their energies to the organization of women's clubs, junior leagues, study groups, and service organizations through which they might make their influence felt publicly. It was through these organizations that women began to mobilize their emancipation efforts and thereby came to wield a powerful political wallop as they advocated moral, social, and legal reforms. Their consolidated efforts were so effective that by 1920 most of their labor reform, temperance, and equal suffrage programs had become the law of the land. Thus, these and many other changes that took place between the late years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century came to represent much more than simple shifts in social customs or even the legal re-adjustment of moral points of view. They came to represent a tremendous breakdown in the traditional understanding of woman. As a part of the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, women who in former times had been exclusively restricted to the tasks of child-bearing and homemaking, who had been subordinated to man in every way and thereby secluded, protected, and controlled by his masculine dominance, now demanded

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<sup>27</sup> Allen, op. cit., p. 87.

a totally different level of understanding, one assuring equal participation in all areas of life, including the right to vote and hold public office, the right to choose their own careers, the right to determine their own futures, and rule their own lives. What this was to mean in the years that were yet to come was certainly not apparent in 1920, but before that decade came to an end, no area of male behavior was free from woman's incessant claim for the equal right to do likewise.<sup>28</sup> An accelerated revolution in manners and morals, social customs and societal standards followed, its effects being most acutely apparent in the area of sexual ethics. Bolstered by the popular acceptance of the "Freudian gospel" and the increasing availability of effective artificial contraceptives, the "new emancipated woman" swept aside the Victorian double standard of sexual morality (which not only placed the heavier burden of moral responsibility upon the woman, but basically denied the true nature of her human sexuality) and now claimed for herself the same right to sexual freedom and pleasure, satisfaction and fulfillment as that enjoyed by man.

The perfection of artificial contraceptives in more recent years has not only confirmed and verified that original claim and assertion, but has also justified and reinforced it! Thus, the sexual liberation of woman brought with it accentuated strides of progress in woman's continued march toward full emancipation and total equality. That drive is not yet complete as a quick scan of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1964) will readily substantiate,

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<sup>28</sup>See *Ibid.*, for interesting presentation of the emancipation of woman and the struggle for equality.

and no one should know that better than ministers who are members of a profession and an institution which is still basically anti-woman and does not hesitate to discriminate against any feminine invasion. That drastic changes in the traditional image of woman have occurred, however, cannot be denied with any reasonable degree of plausible credibility, and the remarkable effect this has had upon our traditional understandings of human sexuality should be readily apparent in the midst of the vast array of new models and images which have now appeared to plague contemporary man and his society in their search for some meaningful models of replacement!

#### IV. RELEVANT CONCLUSIONS

What then do the findings of this historical and sociological survey have to say in regard to this dissertation's quest for relevant perspective and functional definition? No doubt, it certainly reminds us that there can be no hope for an adequate present perspective without an understanding of what has happened in the past. Santa Anna once said, "He who remembers not the past is destined to re-live its mistakes in the future." Consequently, we need to know how and why we got to where we now are if we are to responsibly decide and wisely chart the course of where we are to go from here. Such a survey then, helps us to realize that the pluralism and multiplicity of sexual understandings, attitudes, and practices of the present time represent not only a rebellion against that which no longer makes sense, but also an honest search for that which is more realistic and more appropriate for the here and the now of this day and time. In fact, this historical and sociological survey

helps us to more fully appreciate the fact that much of contemporary criticism and current experimentation reveals a concerted attempt to avoid the mistakes and the failures of the remembered past --- a past which has often harbored and protected sexual understandings, attitudes, and practices which have made life tragically miserable --- a past which has allowed the very springs of life to stagnate and grow stale. Indeed, without such an understanding we could scarcely hope to protect the future from the same fate.

Truly, modern man is searching for new standards and understandings of human sexuality which will be relevant for a new age. In so doing, he needs historical and sociological perspective to help him salvage what is true and of value from the old while attempting to investigate and appropriate what is of significance in the new. Even under the best of circumstances that is no easy task to accomplish, for the times of transition are always most trying as well as extremely precarious. Thus, this historical and sociological survey has not only attempted to expose the hypocrisy and inadequacy of the understandings of the past but it has also sought to reveal those dangers of distortion and confusion which plague the present and threaten the positive possibilities of the future. It is to that problem the next chapter devotes its attention for inundated by a bewildering number of variational alternatives, modern man must face the stark realization that unless he is extremely selective what eventually comes to prevail may be no better than what he now seeks to submerge. Consequently, if the Christian faith is to have any significant influence upon the shape and content of those new standards, it must seek to assist

modern man in his present campaign and struggle. It must join the quest for relevant perspective and functional definition. To that end, this chapter has sought to make a contribution toward the development of perspective through the presentation and consideration of those major historical and sociological factors which have brought us to where we now are. From the past then, we must now turn our attention to the present.

## CHAPTER III

### THE IMPACT OF THE SECULAR REVOLUTION

When traditional sources of authority and traditional models and images of identity break down, a large number of forces and factors unite to affect that collapse, to reinforce it, and to make its demise complete. Many of those forces and factors are components of the secularization process, and as such, owe their existence to the Industrial Revolution which induced their conception, augmented their birth, and sustained their growth. The success of their phenomenal development and the subsequent potency of their influence, however, must be attributed primarily to their inherent inter-relatedness, their mutual support, and their complementary inter-action. A few of the more cogently apparent of these merit our attention and here warrant closer consideration.

#### I. COMPONENTS OF THE SECULAR REVOLUTION

Industrialization and materialism. If necessity is the mother of invention, and invention is the father of industry, then materialism is unquestionably the child of both. Who should know that better than the modern American. He lives in a society whose industrial production is matched by material abundance --- a society whose ever expanding economy is equaled only by its ever rising standard of living. As a product of a mass production mind-set, he is likewise a product of Madison Avenue's merchantile madness. What he does not have, he can make, and what he can make, he can

possess. Thus, production and possession become the measure of all things, and what a man can do or get done and what a man has or can get become more important than what a man is or can be. Consequently, everything in such a society becomes functional and everything has its price. Human sexuality is no exception.

In such an affluent, mechanized, materialistic environment man becomes obsessed with the things he can possess. He surrounds himself with a world of things and seeks from them some sense of security. What he does not have, he wants, and what he wants, he tries to get, and contrary to the popular cliché, he does not worship the "Almighty Dollar" so much as he worships what that dollar can buy. Consequently, he becomes the partner and the pawn of a competitive consumer society whose production and expanded profits are dependent upon what he can be persuaded to want and buy. In other words, man finds himself caught in a vicious cycle in which what he is able to buy is dependent upon what he is able to produce and what he is able to sell. It is no small wonder then that so many modern men possess a market mentality in which everything has become a dispensible commodity, including human sexuality.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the popularity of today's Playboy philosophy which reduces human sexuality to a packageable consumption item, tax free and easily accessible to the knowledgeable consumer who knows what to wear and what to drive --- who knows what to buy and has the money to buy it.

For the insecure young man with newly acquired free time and money who still feels uncertain about his consumer skills, Playboy supplies a comprehensive and authoritative guidebook to this forbidding new world to which he now has access. The skilled consumer

is cool and unruffled. He savors sports cars, liquor, high fidelity and book-club selections with a casual unhurried aplomb. Though he must certainly have and use the latest consumption item, he must not permit himself to get too attached to it. The style<sup>1</sup> will change and he must always be ready to adjust.

Thus, in an age of industry and material affluence, it should not be surprising that human sexuality also becomes a consumer product, to the king of commodities, a highly desirable accessory, and to those willing to pay the right price, an indispensable item of luxurious living. In such a society man is too often liberated from his labor only to be enslaved by his leisure. His understandings of human sexuality dramatically reflect that change as it becomes to him then a source of entertainment and a personal recreational pursuit. In a society obsessed with its economy of abundance and preoccupied with the fulfillment of man's personal pleasures and desires, one could hardly expect the situation to be otherwise.

Urbanization and pluralism. If one were to look for yesterday's "vanishing adolescent" the odds are that he would probably be found in today's "secular city." It seems as if almost overnight everyone has moved to the city and suddenly we have become a nation of urban inhabitants, our great masses of humanity huddling together in ever enlarging conglomerates of population, streaming hurriedly over ever expanding complexes of highways and express lanes while busily chasing one another's shadow from

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<sup>1</sup>Harvey Cox, The Secular City (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 200-201.



one giant corporation to the next. Industry has made the city, and now the city faithfully worships and exalts its creator. As the center of industry and production, it has also become the center of business and commerce. As the center of business and commerce, it has likewise become the center of employment and residence, and as such it has in due turn become the center of communication, education, and entertainment. Thus, the city is the center of life as it is now lived. It dominates every aspect of our existence and conditions every component of our culture while at the same time it has created new problems of profound preponderance. The phenomenal growth and development of the city and the rapid environmental transitions and personal adjustments that have had to be made by the people who have converged upon it are staggering to say the least, and have brought with them a multiplicity of new tensions and compounded confrontations.

All times of accelerated change bring about some sense of uncertainty and insecurity. When familiar values and cultural landmarks disappear and one finds himself living among and subsequently confronted by a wide range of differing alternatives, the freedom to decide can be a bewildering experience, especially when the old norms no longer hold true and the new ones have not yet been personally established and internalized. Consequently, one of the big problems of the city where man now lives is the problem of living in an atmosphere of pluralism --- a climate of multiple alternatives. In his new environment man does not know who he is nor how he is to act. His peer groups may tell him one thing and his family background another. His religious convictions may

affirm one alternative while his academic training may propose yet another, and the mass media still another. Yet in the midst of such a wide spectrum of untried and unfathomed possibilities all competing for his allegiance, the real problem man faces is not so much the divergence of various choices as it is the absence of definitive sources of authority with which to make distinctions and comparisons. John C. Wynn confirms this assertion when he writes,

The problem is not simply that these heterogeneous representatives tend to blow a cacophony of uncertain trumpets, but that the hearer is usually able to pick up only the note of the instrument nearest him.<sup>2</sup>

The notorious impersonalization of the city, man's basic detachment from his former sources of identity, and man's new unrelatedness and increasing anonymity allowing him no social sources of reliable support, compound and complicate his pluralistic plight. Consequently, he either becomes a schizophrenic actor, wearing a variety of masks and playing a host of different roles which are determined by where he is and whom he is with, or he plays the public opinion polls, allowing nebulous factors of what is being done to determine what he himself will do and be. Regardless of whether that condition is called radical depersonalization, identity diffusion, or an orgy of open-mindedness, the implications for man's understandings and expressions of human sexuality are apparent and rather traumatic. Thus, modern urbanization and its resultant pluralism have left

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<sup>2</sup> John Charles Wynn (ed.), Sex, Family and Society in Theological Focus (New York: Association Press, 1966), p. 29.

modern man adrift in a sea of confusion. In this sexual wilderness man may wander aimlessly through many deserts of despair before he can again take his rest in an oasis of certainty.

Communication and commercialism. Never in the history of mankind has any generation been so bombarded with so much knowledge from so many different directions and through so many divergent sources of sound, sight, and sense, as has this one. In fact, as products of universal educational training and children of the knowledge explosion, no generation has ever had a better opportunity to learn so much about so many different subjects. Saturated with a constant deluge of scientific facts and figures from the wee hours of the morning to the late hours of the night, every modern man must continually grow in his knowledge of the world or within a very short length of time, the world will pass him by. Indeed, continuing education is no longer a special privilege, it is a mandatory necessity. Consequently, what one thinks and how one acts is primarily a reflection of what one has chosen to absorb. Consciously and unconsciously, we are all influenced and to some degree also molded by the mass communications media of our mechanized world, perhaps more so than any of us realize or are willing to admit. How much they have shaped our present attitudes and understandings of human sexuality emphatically dramatizes the truth of that fact, for today we encounter sexual references all around us in such a profusion that we hardly recognize them as such anymore. The erosion of traditional values and understandings, as well as the disappearance of specifically regulated modes of

expression have left contemporary man free but without direction. Consequently, the modern mass communications media have not hesitated to supply him with new alternatives.

No doubt the present generation knows more technically about sex than any that has preceded it. Public and university libraries contain scientific reports on the sexual behavior of practically every culture known to man. Surveys and statistics cover the sexual activities and opinions of the American male and female in minute detail while psychoanalytic books and papers probe the sexual origins of neurotic behavior, inhibitions, and fixations. Thus, depending upon his tastes and inclinations, modern man has access to every imaginable kind of book on and about human sexuality, ranging from children's stories about the "birds and the bees" through anatomical descriptions of the procreative organs and specific suggestions and techniques to enhance sexual fulfillment and physical pleasure.<sup>3</sup> Sex education is now also a widely accepted part of the curriculum in our public schools, freely discussed in its own right, both in science and literature (since almost every prominent author in the last fifty years has paid his tribute to sex); and what is not fully discussed there can be easily learned from one's peers or from the dozens of paperback "sex manuals" which line the racks of almost every store.

The paperback book is, of course, another innovation made possible by industrial ingenuity, invention, and productivity. Everything from the cheapest of trash to the greatest of the classics

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<sup>3</sup>Hans F. Hofmann, Sex Incorporated (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), pp. 19, 44.

can now be purchased in a paperback edition at a nominal price. An ever increasing proportion of the paperback books unfortunately have become a part of the new erotic literature whose primary purpose and original intent is to arouse the reader without arousing the public censor. Sexual stimulation is both its goal and its sales gimmick. Some of the materials, of course, are far more sophisticated than others, but now that the courts have freed modern man to place on paper and to put into print almost anything that he may choose, the covers and the pictures and the story content have had to become increasingly more erotic, perverse, and distorted in order to sell.

Erotic literature has been around for a number of years and probably had its origin in the "true confession" magazines which appeared on the market in the early 1920's and later developed into the "picture pose specials." In contemporary times this material has found newer modes of expression and exposure. It has reached new depths of "exposure" in the nudist magazines which now threaten to put the commercial exploitation models right out of business. After all, there's not much room left for growth and development of interest when the mystery is gone and nothing is left to the imagination.<sup>4</sup> This has also been true of the commercial exploitation of deviate minority groups who now publish their own magazines and thereby plead their own case to the public and expose deliberate discrimination and commercial exploitation and

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<sup>4</sup>The rapid decline in sales and distribution of pornography after its legalization in Scandanavia is an excellent confirmation of this assertion.

abuse. Erotic literature has also reached new heights of expression, acceptance, and sophistication through the publication of such widely distributed and widely read magazines as Esquire, Playboy, and Cosmopolitan. These publications, however, represent much more than sexual stimulants. They represent the epitome of a profit motivated campaign by commercial interests of a mass production minded society to exploit and perpetuate a sexual image which can be controlled by the consumption and the use of its products. The sophisticated values they present have no ultimate satisfaction and no lasting significance. As one of the commodity credits of life, sex is to be regulated in "enlightened" self interest, upward mobility, and competitive consumption. Symbolizing the values and aspirations of an affluent society, these twentieth century icons conjured up by the advertising guilds to sanctify our economy, perpetuate the hoax that one's sexuality can somehow be enhanced and fortified by buying and using the right product. Because we have been led to believe an affluent society necessitates an ever expanding consumer market, we have allowed sex to be used to sell anything and in so doing have been bombarded with "perhaps the most skillfully contrived array of erotic stimulants ever amassed."<sup>5</sup> The oldest profession in the world never reached the refinement of the financial success that highly respected businessmen enjoy today who sell their products by such means of sexual innuendo and exhibitionism.<sup>6</sup> Thus, human sexuality has become a commodity which is successfully marketed by the vast advertising agencies

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<sup>5</sup>Cox, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>6</sup>Hofmann, op.cit., p. 34.

through the mass communications media. The height of their verbal and visual propaganda efforts is most adequately reflected in the television commercials through which the big machine works on its subjects continuously day and night. From innumerable screens and stages it flashes the larger than life-sized images of consumer sex while from its myriad loud speakers and commercial platforms it broadcasts the words and the rhythm and the message of modern erotica.<sup>7</sup> So successful has been its campaign and so wide-spread has been the acceptance of its images and philosophy that in more recent seasonal schedules the most popular programs produced have been those which not only give the censors their biggest headaches but also freely perpetuate the idea that sex is a game --- something someone gets away with --- a sort of sparring sport --- indeed, the only "legitimate recreational pursuit of an affluent society!"<sup>8</sup>

As a part of the modern entertainment world, these television programs no doubt are indebted to the movie production industry which long ago gave new life to the idea of romantic love and has managed to perpetuate that hoax with ever increasing ingenuity. Glorifying the passionate love scene, the beautiful body, and the irresistible attraction of the opposite sex, the adult movie and, in its more "expressive" form, the adult art film,

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<sup>7</sup>"The Second Sexual Revolution," Time, LXXXIII (January 21, 1964), 54.

<sup>8</sup>For example, "Laugh-in," "The Dean Martin Show," "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour," and "Playboy after Dark."

have made their debut and now are generally accepted without a second thought. The movie industry has literally built its fortune, its image and its empire upon sex, and a change in approach is not likely, at least not in the near future. Consequently, its new expressions today are more a product of Hollywood's desire to outshock T. V. than they are the presentation of anything really more imaginative and progressively more creative. (There are, of course, notable exceptions although they remain a decidedly insignificant minority.) It's simply more of the same old message set to a new tune: "Romantic love will save you and sex will make you free!" Thus, in an era of mass communications and commercialism, novels, plays, movies, records, radios, television sets, magazines, and textbooks abound with sexual conversations, symbols, and endless connotations. These constant references alone, however, do not constitute the crux of the real dilemma, they merely point to it. The real dilemma and crucial concern is not so much what man hears as how he responds. Truly, they have exposed our present plight and contemporary confusion.

Experimentation and Medical Progressivism. No responsible student of contemporary society can disregard the far reaching effects that modern scientific discoveries have had upon our traditional understandings of human sexuality. The triple terrors of conception, infection, and detection have now been deposed by penicillin, prophylactics, and the pill. How tightly our traditional understandings and standards have been inter-woven



with the potency of their threats could scarcely have been known had not modern science reduced their power to the point where they can no longer frighten people into being and doing what has traditionally been expected. Sex is now safe, and what that will mean for our understandings of human sexuality in the future can not be predicted with any competent degree of adequacy or accuracy.

In the past, traditional understandings of human sexuality were determined to a large extent by the possible consequences that could result from its physical expressions. Based on the harsh realities of pragmatic responsibility, these understandings and standards were maintained by practicality, reinforced by religion, and fortified by fear, as the following satirical rhyme illustrates:

There was a young lady named Wilde  
Who kept herself quite undefiled  
By thinking of Jesus  
And social diseases  
And the fear of having a child.<sup>9</sup>

If in fact we are experiencing a second sexual revolution today, its origin and continued impetus must be accredited to the progress of modern medical science. Its contemporary technology now makes it possible for people to separate the procreative function of human sexuality from its physical expressions,

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<sup>9</sup> Joseph Fletcher, Moral Responsibility (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), p. 88.

or as Joseph Fletcher most aptly expressed it, "Effective birth control methods now allow modern man to separate love making from baby making."<sup>10</sup> These new discoveries have radically transformed the context of human sexual expression and have brought up for careful re-examination the traditional taboos of a former time. Indeed, many persons are now asking "why sexual relations must be confined to marriage or even, for that matter, to the normal organs of reproduction."<sup>11</sup> If proper hygienic precautions are taken for the prevention of conception and disease, why should sexual relations be restricted at all? The built-in deterrents of another age are now gone. The progress of modern medical science has separated fact from fancy and their findings have decisively changed modern man's perspectives.

It is a far cry indeed from a time when a leading physician could state publicly (just before the turn of the century) that "any woman who feels pleasure in the sexual relationship is no better than a prostitute" to a time when a report on the sexual response of men and women observed in intercourse under actual laboratory conditions becomes a nation-wide best seller.<sup>12</sup>

Scientific experimentation and investigation has actually turned sex into an academic subject, and its department of research has presented modern man with a staggering number of varying

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>11</sup>"Reflections on the Revolution in Sex," America, CXII (March 6, 1965), 312.

<sup>12</sup>Isadore Rubin and Lester Kirkendall, Sex in The Adolescent Years (New York: Association Press, 1968).

alternatives. For better or for worse, the predictions for the future offer no promise of relief nor resolve. The present prognostications of modern medical science include once a year anovulents for men and women, sperm banks and ova reservoirs for scientific breeding and artificial insemination, oral spermicidal contraceptives for men, and possibly an oral abortifacient --- the morning-after pill, effective for pregnancies of up to three months contingency. If modern man is confused now, what will he be then!

Scientific investigation and experimentation have done much to broaden our perspectives and understandings of human sexuality, and it is to their credit that modern man now faces the problems of the present with a new mental and emotional attitude based upon expanded knowledge and open frankness. With this newly acquired outlook, he must now seriously re-think and perhaps even radically revise his previous attitudes and understandings from the personal problems of sexual deviation to the critical concerns of the world's population explosion. He can responsibly do no less!

## II. EFFECTS OF THE SECULAR REVOLUTION

Today sex is no longer shocking in life nor in fantasy. Everybody talks about it, but the real question seems to be, does anyone know what he is talking about? In the area of sex and sexuality, as in the famous fishing tales, actual fact is so strangely mixed with exaggeration that one dare not seriously

measure himself nor his society by such questionable criteria, lest liberal overstatements turn fantasy into fact. Indeed, psychological journals abound with countless instances in which people have been forced into modes of behavior they would have never sought otherwise had not their interpretations of prevailing attitudes and actions not created feelings of inadequacy and fears of abnormality. Thus, if any sexual revolution has occurred in our day and time, it has been more in the minds and the words of the people than in any dramatic change in their actions. (What that could possibly initiate however, is a matter worthy of more serious concern.) But what people say, does not necessarily reflect what they do and what they do, does not necessarily show how they feel about it. What is being done, does not necessarily determine what ought to be done, and a revolution is never judged simply by the established order against which it is directed. Yet out of an aggregate of words and actions, every society makes a statement about itself.

What then does the secular revolution have to say to us about our present understandings of human sexuality and what have been its effective consequences? Certainly it has given rise to a multiplicity of widely diverse interpretations and variational expressions. Indeed, in this secular age, human sexuality has come to mean many different things to many different people --- ranging from something very special to something very common --- from the highest expression of human relatedness to a mechanized routine of release, so meaningless and so mundane that its expression has come to be no more than a matter of mutual

masturbation by means of complementary systems of human plumbing. Multiplicity then, has produced a compartmentalized mentality which has tended to reduce human sexuality to an isolated component of man's physical being, separated from the wholeness of his life and expressed accordingly. The subsequent result has denatured modern man and has fragmented the unifying totality of his life and being. It has in fact, exposed his desperate need for a fuller and more functional definition of human sexuality.

The secular revolution has also exposed modern man's irresponsibility and abusive self-interest. Man, of course, is supposed to use things and love people, but in a mass production consumer society, characterized by materialism and anonymity, man too often confuses means and ends and comes to love things and to use people. Thus, physical understandings of human sexuality degenerate into forces of exploitation and depersonalization and man finds himself the victim of a cultural charade in which sexual responsibility is made increasingly more difficult. For better or for worse, the secular revolution is challenging contemporary man, in the multiplicity of his variational interpretations, to clarify what it means to be sexually responsible in a secular age and is forcing him to accept the personal and social implications of what he decides.

Obviously, the impact of the secular revolution has established a time when there are few clear-cut, well established, and generally accepted sources of external authority --- a time when every man has been left to make most of his decisions on his

own, particularly in regard to matters of sexual understanding and expression. The secular revolution thus has brought with it an intensified need for proper perspective --- a perspective which by the very nature of its definition and function demands an understanding of the secular revolution. In other words, the secular revolution has intensified the need to understand, not only what has happened in the past but also to grasp what is happening in the present moment. To that end this chapter has sought to examine and clarify the inner dynamics of the secular revolution and in so doing to reinforce this dissertation's persistent plea for perspective and to substantiate its need.

### III. RELEVANT CONCLUSIONS

Amid this contemporary confusion intensified and compounded by the impact of the secular revolution, what significant threads of thought can be brought together to weave some responsible fabric of conclusion and guide us in our quest for relevant perspective and functional definition?

Perhaps the first conclusive directive we can make and take is that we need to listen to the voice of contemporary critics and take seriously what they have to say, and thereby make an honest appraisal of the failures and shortcomings of the past. Where there are faults, contradictions, and fallacies, they should be acknowledged and amends made.

Secondly, we need to carefully consider and evaluate the confusion of the present understandings and expressions of human sexuality in all their variational multiplicity. In so doing we need

to be aware of the fact that perverted expressions of human sexuality are not always reflections of perverted understandings. They may also be defense mechanisms against a coldly impersonal and aggressively competitive cultural climate or they may be representative of something else of an entirely different nature. In any case, we should not hesitate to expose and call into question sexual exploitation and irresponsibility, regardless of where it is found or in what form. Indeed, any understanding or behavior which leads to the dehumanization of human sexuality and the subsequent denaturing of man deserves our utmost attention. To be sure, not all modern understandings and expressions of human sexuality take the form of sexual perversion, and in many cases contemporary experimentation reflects a conscious desire and serious search for something better than what the past has offered. Such expressions regardless of their source or intent merit our careful consideration and where significant insights are revealed they deserve our acceptance and incorporation.

Thirdly, the impact of the secular revolution has made it readily apparent that we must now approach the problem of definition from an inter-disciplinary stance --- a stance which holds in delicate balance the truths of all related fields of endeavor and thereby forms a creative synthesis of their inter-related perspectives. Human sexuality therefore must be considered and expressed only in the fullness of its multi-dimensional character.

Finally then, in this quest for relevant perspective and functional definition we can conclude that our task is to competently emphasize those dimensions of human existence to which the

Christian faith most decisively speaks. In regard to human sexuality that dimension demands respect for the created order of man's humanity and seeks to clarify and protect those understandings and practices of man's sexuality which encourage and sustain its uniquely human character. (Natural dimensions) Because for the first time man is being forced to examine human sexuality on its own terms, by joining in the current campaign to clarify and define what makes man's sexuality fully human, the Christian faith can make sure that man's freedom to choose, his ability to communicate, and his capacity to love are given due consideration. Its affirmation of the centrality of brotherly love can provide an ethical norm for personal expression so that the freedom of the individual never takes precedence over the common good of all. (Religious dimension) Its emphasis upon man's relatedness to others and the solidarity of mankind can assure the recognition of sexual dissimilarity as being more than anatomical but also psycho-social in character, created for mutual complementarity in all areas of life for the enrichment of human existence. (Social dimension) In a like manner, then, the Christian faith's affirmation of the unity of life and its insistence upon the necessity of proper perspective can help orient physical expressions of human sexuality into the total context of human existence, and thereby confirm that human sexuality belongs to the whole person and to the whole of life. (Psychodynamic dimensions) In short, the Christian faith must help modern man determine the true nature of his human sexuality and clarify what it means to be sexually responsible in a secular age. It must make its own contribution to his quest for



relevant perspective and functional definition.

The secular revolution has come and yet is still upon us. Its implications are before us and its possibilities are open to our consideration. Consequently, we must now decide whether we will make a contribution or an accommodation --- whether we will simply legitimize that revolution or become a creative catalyst of constructive evolution and change.

## CHAPTER IV

### RELEVANT DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

#### AND THE FORMULATION OF AN INTEGRATED DEFINITION

Having sought to establish some sense of perspective we turn now to the problem of definition. In so doing, however, we need to keep ever before us that which our quest for relevant perspective has taught us --- namely, that in times of radical change and continuous flux, modern man must live in two different worlds --- one in the midst of its death throes and the other in the midst of its birth pangs; that in such times concepts of the old are no longer completely adequate and concepts of the new are not consistently reliable; and that consequently, modern man's "existential predicament" suspends him between the two with his fate hanging in the balance. Nowhere is this predicament made more painfully apparent than in modern man's myriad understandings of the true nature of human sexuality. Thus, the Christian faith, if it is to be heard and taken seriously must help modern man retain the best of both worlds. It must seek to help him salvage what is of value from the old while seeking to appropriate what is revealed to be true in the new. It must seek to help him constantly revise and reconcile his understandings of human sexuality and reorient them into the totality of his existence, incorporating truth wherever it is found. In reality, this calls for an inter-disciplinary approach --- one which will respect the factual verities of all

related fields of endeavor, and will thereby hold in delicate balance the truths of both science and religion, the rights and responsibilities of both the individual and the community, the insights of both the past and the present. It is only from this kind of an approach and only from this kind of a perspective that any adequate understanding of human sexuality will ever emerge. It is to this task that this chapter directs its attention.

The dimensions of definition which could be emphasized are, of course, quite numerous, and those which are chosen for consideration and termed "relevant" often serve to reveal more about the academic orientations and personal preferences of the writer than do they to illuminate and reveal the inner dynamics of the subject at hand. In this chapter we have chosen to deal with those dimensions of human sexuality which seem to be more obviously relevant and on whose significance and importance there seems to be some degree of consensus. It cannot be denied however, that our preferences and considerations reveal a decidedly theological orientation. In justification of our selections, then, we can only appeal to that which we believe to be the common experience of all men. Consequently, what we present in the form of relevant dimensions of definition is neither science nor dogma but is a phenomenology of human sexuality --- a theological overview of human sexual existence. "Whatever its validity or limitations, it represents the type of analysis which the theological tradition has for the most part avoided."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>David Day Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 220.

We have chosen to lift up for consideration and explication the natural, the social, the religious, and the psycho-dynamic dimensions of human sexuality. The natural dimensions emphasize the structures of human existence --- an emphasis whose importance has been almost totally overlooked or disregarded by those outside the Roman Catholic tradition. Its realities cannot be denied and must be given their due consideration particularly in relation to any interpretation of the doctrine of creation. The social dimensions of human sexuality have been included because sexual reflections on social relatedness in the past have, without notable exception, been limited to physical modes of genital expression, exclusively restricted to the state of marital union for theological sanction. The sexual complementarity of man and woman in all areas of life has been completely ignored --- an omission which has proved to be tragic in its historical implications and which, in the light of the secular revolution and the emancipation of woman, can no longer be disregarded. The religious dimension has found justification for its presence because its past treatment has always tended to be more negative and legalistic than objective in nature. Consequently, in view of the progress of modern Biblical scholarship, a major reappraisal of traditional interpretations of human sexuality, the absence of which makes the search for an adequate sexual ethic more remote, seems in order. Finally, this presentation includes what we have chosen to call the psycho-dynamic dimensions of human sexuality --- dimensions which, after the discoveries of Freud and the rise of modern psychology, cannot be excluded without serious implications.

So obvious an omission could not help but create reservations about the academic competence of the presentation in question, for the "Freudian revolution" has forever altered the form and extent of man's self understanding --- a fact which in turn has profound implications for establishing the adequacy of any responsible sexual ethic.

These four dimensions make up the composition of our presentation --- a presentation which does not pretend to be inclusive of all important theological dimensions of human sexuality but which does claim to merit serious consideration of any responsible attempt to arrive at a functional definition of the subject at hand.

## I. NATURAL DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

Every human being enters this world as a sexual being, and as such, remains so all of his life, from the breathing of his first breath to the breathing of his last. Man, like all of the other animals, is born male or female, and by natural heredity, by scientific definition, and by divine order of creation he must of mandatory necessity be one or the other.<sup>2</sup> Man's life is sexual and his sexuality is a part of the essential context of his existence. As one of the fundamental facts of human life and factors of being, man passes through its portals into life and in turn ushers in his own progeny between its gates, forming that organic link which

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<sup>2</sup>Medical definitions include not only chromosomenal order of forty-six but also specific requirement of sexual distinction.

forever binds generation to generation. By his very nature man is a sexual being whose whole outlook and response to life is based upon his acceptance or rejection of his human sexuality. Indeed, the influence of his sexuality casts its shadow upon every facet of his human existence, affecting both his body and his basic personal being.

Throughout all ages, man has drawn this same definitive conclusion. When ancient man began to reflect on the nature and manner of human life, he too reached the same conclusion as the "ultra-modern" man of today, namely that man's sexuality is rooted in the fundamental foundation of nature and the basic structures of existence --- so basic that it must in fact have its origin in the given order of all things, even in the evolutionary process. So it is, every man enters this life with the natural accoutrements of his human sexuality in physical flesh and blood along with the seemingly latent though dramatically deceptive seeds of future development. In the past, human sexuality has been closely, if not exclusively, identified with these physical manifestations, and to this very day, many people habitually discuss sexuality as something man has and very seldom as a necessary part of that total framework of human existence out of which he must forever view the world as well as himself. Needless to say, such limited reference has had tragic consequences as perverse exploitation has capitalized upon its wide spread prevalence.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>i. e. Pornography and prostitution.

Hans Hofmann reminds us that,

we are likely to speak of sexuality in the same detached way that we speak of having sexual organs as a part of the human anatomy. . . . It would be more helpful to acknowledge that we are conceived in<sup>4</sup> sexual cohabitation and born as sexual beings.

Prone to misunderstand human sexuality as being separate from man's personal identity, we too often refer to man as nature and not as being. Unfortunately, we treat one another accordingly! However, regardless of how limited we may often be in our understandings and perspectives of human sexuality, it can not be denied that structurally and functionally man as male and man as female are quite dissimilar. They are not the same, but neither are they unrelated. The very structure and function of their dissimilarity forms a remarkable complementarity. (This is quite obvious physically and biologically, but it is also true socially and psychologically.) Man as male and man as female are dependent upon one another for that which they can not alone bring to themselves. This is not to assert that man as male or man as female is not fully human until he is physically united with another, but it is to affirm that man as male and man as female, in order to be fully human must be inter-related in their human sexuality. Man is not fully man unless he is first of all male or female,<sup>5</sup> but in his recognition and acceptance of his sexual

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<sup>4</sup>Hans F. Hofmann, Sex Incorporated (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>This again is in reference to the mandatory bio-physical requirement of medical definition.

dissimilarity, he is not fully man unless he also recognizes and accepts his sexual mutuality and complementarity. Consequently, no man is sufficient unto himself. By the very nature of his sexuality, man is designed, fitted and destined for inter-relatedness and human community.

## II. SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

Man is distinguished from other animals not only by his superior intelligence, his chromosomenal order, and his verbal communication, but most especially by his transcendent self-awareness.<sup>6</sup> Not only is man able to think and reason, he is also able to reason about his thinking. Consequently, man is a subjective as well as an objective thinker, and as such, he is able to reflect upon the meaning of his life and the order of his human existence. He knows that he exists; and he knows that he did not bring himself into existence. He knows that at birth, he like all other men before him, stepped from the womb of his mother, the body of another, and that biologically he is eternally indebted to one man and one woman for the genesis of his existence.<sup>7</sup> This trinity of man's being which is inherent in the very structure of human life differs from all other animals in that every man subjectively knows that he is forever bound to two other persons

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<sup>6</sup>Definition of man given by Viktor Frankl in class lectures at Perkins School of Theology in the summer of 1966.

<sup>7</sup>This man knows by deductive reasoning and reflection.



in a way in which no other three persons have ever been bound before or shall ever be bound again.<sup>8</sup> It is this knowledge of his necessary relatedness to at least two other persons that lies at the basis of man's existence and testifies to the true nature of his human sexuality.<sup>9</sup> Man is a sexually relational being, and in the discovery and recognition of this fact, man's questions concerning his origin and his personal incompleteness find their natural resolve. Man's sexuality, therefore, is both a factor of his human heredity and a factor of his human growth and personal development among others. It is constant as well as variable, fundamental as well as formative, determined as well as developed. As such, every man's human sexuality has a history out of which it comes and a fulfillment toward which it continuously moves.

Differing from the sexuality of other animals in that it is inherently relational and not basically instinctive, man's true sexuality is decisively linked to the personal and social factors of his life. It is a constant component of man's existential atmosphere, seeking fulfillment through personal encounter. As such, it affects and is affected by the patterns of his personality development as well as the formation of his individual self identity. Subjectively aware of both the nature of his origin and of the

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<sup>8</sup>This subjective knowledge of the trinity of man's being holds true even in the case of identical twins where objectively two individuals have a genetic make up that is the same. This does not deny their subjective uniqueness and differentiation.

<sup>9</sup>Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948), pp. 345-347.

incompleteness of his own humanity apart from the complementary components of the opposite sex,<sup>10</sup> man thus concludes that the nature and character of his existence is intrinsically social. Consequently, the growth and development of human sexuality toward responsible maturity of expression are decisively molded by the constituent elements of human socialization. "There are then, sexual components in every situation involved in normal relations."<sup>11</sup> Again then, it must be emphatically asserted that man's sexuality is not merely the effect of processes having their seat in the genital organs. It is rather an expression of man's fundamental mode of being-in-the-world together with other men,<sup>12</sup> affecting not only man's individual growth but also his interaction with others, beginning at birth and continuing until death.

The implications of such an emphasis are staggering to say the least, for extensive scientific investigation into the complementary nature of human sexuality in its psycho-social dimensions has at best been negligible in the past and to date woefully inadequate. That man as male and man as female approach life from uniquely different but inherently complementary perspectives in regard to thought, belief, and emotion, as well as mode of expression needs to be recognized and may hold the hopeful

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<sup>10</sup>Self-awareness leads to self acceptance or rejection which in turn determines self identity.

<sup>11</sup>Joseph Kockelmans, "Merleau-Ponty on Sexuality," Journal of Existentialism, VI:25 (Fall 1965), 20.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

promise of bringing about one of the most profound of all transformations of current popular conceptualizations advocating man's sexual independence. Such an understanding of the true complementarity of sexual differentiation in all aspects and areas of human life could well be that key which will unlock the door to humanity's highest and most complete manifestations of personal as well as social fulfillment! Indeed, it may well be that many of the contemporary perversions and distorted emasculations of the true nature of human sexuality have their inception and growth in the many years of neglect, casual imperception, and blind denial of these seemingly elemental self-evident truths.<sup>13</sup>

Merleau-Ponty's conception of man as a phenomenological, existential being stresses this human meaning of man's sexuality. He writes,

Whatever the theoretical declarations of Freud may have been, psychoanalytical research has in fact led to an explanation of man, not in terms of his sexual substructures, but to a discovery of complementary relations and attitudes in human sexuality which had previously been regarded as residing only in man's consciousness.<sup>14</sup>

Accordingly, we should be concerned not with man's peripheral actions so much as with an original intentionality which follows the general flow of all human existence. If this be true, then

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<sup>13</sup>For further development see the works of Frederic Wood, Pieter de Jung, J. C. Wynn, Paul Tournier, and Tom Shannon.

<sup>14</sup>Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), p. 157.

every man in his sexual polarity holds in his very being that key which alone can release the true sexual nature of his complementary counterpart. Human sexuality, consequently, is not only a hereditary inheritance, it is at the same time a determinative endowment of society presented through all inter-personal encounters of man as male and man as female. Even in the widest possible context, man's sexuality encompasses a manifold awareness of being incomplete, and on the multi-dimensional level of his self-awareness, self identity, personality, intellect, emotion, and behavior, the nature of his individual sexuality urges man to continually seek after that which alone can make him truly complete.<sup>15</sup> Thus, human sexuality is not an autonomous cycle in and of itself. Rather, it has internal connections and reciprocal links within the whole cognitive order of man's being, structurally and functionally, biologically and psychologically, personally and socially. Consequently, the integration of its many components into a definitive unity is an enormous task of the utmost complexity!

### III. RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

Underlying all of the basic tenets and primal presuppositions of the Christian faith, and taking unqualified precedence over them all, is the fundamental belief that the Christian faith

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 157-158.

alone presents to man the most decisively adequate and most thoroughly comprehensive panorama of life possible. As such, the Gospel is understood to be a unitive force in the world which seeks to bring into full focus and proper perspective the various fragmentary and compartmental aspects of human existence. It seeks to help man develop a synoptic overview with which to draw together the broken pieces of life into a united whole and thereby reveal the full richness of human existence as it was intended to be. With such an emphasis upon the wholeness of life, the Christian faith possibly offers to modern man the single best hope for a truly responsible and realistically complete understanding of the nature of human sexuality.

With such a possibility in the weigh, it is important to consider at least briefly, those definitive sources to which the Christian faith attributes its unique perspectives as well as to scan its major motifs, particularly those regarding possible insights into the true nature of human sexuality. In so doing, it must be kept constantly in mind that throughout much of history, the Christian Church has been basically anti-sexual, and to a certain extent, must bear a sizeable portion of the blame for the perverse distortions and pluralistic confusion of these presently perplexing times. But, just as the positions of must human institutions are maintained only so long as they are realistic and tenable, so the Church's perverse and basically heretical understanding of the nature of human sexuality has not prevailed. Modern science has not hesitated to shatter the Church's dark and dreary delusions. Unfortunately, with this warranted

invalidation of the traditional position of the Christian Church came likewise a general disregard for the essential truths of the Christian faith which were quite mistakenly equated with the same. Erosion and collapse of religious credibility were the inevitable results. However, in the more recent scholastic discoveries of Biblical scholarship making it possible to distinguish theological norms of essential kerygmatic truth from the historical trappings of their society and culture, there have come imperative demands for the Church to return to the original and essential truths of the Christian faith. As a result, the Church has now found a new opportunity to redeem the tragedies of its past and to transform the normless chaos and confusion of the present.<sup>16</sup>

After subjecting all of the pertinent passages of scripture to historical form critical analysis, modern Biblical scholarship now affirms with a confident degree of certitude that the Old Testament generally regards human sexuality as being natural, normal, and good. Its genesis is attributed to the primordial design of God's good creation, and like everything else in the created order, it too can be used by man for good or for evil. Its uniquely human dimension as distinguished from the sexuality of other animals finds expression in both priestly and yahwehistic accounts of creation. In the priestly account, the creation and definition of man includes both male and female together. As such, man's sexuality is a reflection, or at least one aspect of being created in the image of God. Karl Barth has most effectively developed

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<sup>16</sup>See historical references in Chapter Two.

this understanding in terms of what he calls man's "co-humanity." Human sexuality is understood to be a reflection of the God-man relationship --- a reflection of man's "co-humanity" with God. It is the very thing about man which is most like God. It is not simply a bodily function, but is rather a way of encountering, meeting, and making a partner out of the other. It is a way of being and a way of letting others be. Indeed, the sexual distinction and duality that exists between man as male and man as female is the primal, original, and exemplary sphere of man's co-humanity with man. It, like man's relatedness to God, is based upon a structural and functional differentiation and is the first realm or sphere of man's relatedness to man --- a reflective example of life lived in community. Man's incompleteness apart from other men, and most especially apart from his sexual counterpart, is reflective of man's incompleteness apart from God. Thus, by the very nature of the divine order of creation, man can not be man apart from God or apart from others. Indeed, it is man's sexual nature which constantly bears witness to this essential fact of human existence.<sup>17</sup>

The Yahwehist account of creation also emphasizes a unique human dimension of man's sexuality. Its origin is likewise attributed to God, who is the author of creation, and whose reason for bringing sexual differentiation and complementarity into existence is stated by the Creator himself in his affirmation: "It is not good that man should be alone." Thus, human sexuality is created by God for man's own well being and is given to him as a

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<sup>17</sup>Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics (Edinburgh: Clark, 1961), III. 117-121.

gift. Consequently, its purpose is not merely reproductive in character but is most especially relational. As such, the Old Testament never refers to man's sexuality as something apart from man himself. Rather, in both accounts of creation and elsewhere, the Old Testament speaks of man only as a psychosomatic unity, regarding any dualistic anthropology as a profanation of the created nature of man. By the divine order of creation the strongest of animal impulses, reproductive survival, has been inseparably bound to man's need for relatedness. Whenever the two are torn asunder, the true nature of human sexuality is sinfully perverted and irresponsibly distorted, human sexuality is denatured, and man is himself dehumanized. Thus, the Old Testament affirms that man's sexual nature is subject to sinful abuse and idolatrous perversion in the exact same sense as all other aspects of his human existence --- no more and no less.<sup>18</sup>

The Old Testament also affirms that man who was created to love and to be loved, most often chooses to love only himself. He refuses to be his brother's keeper, and he rebels against God. Man sins and in his freedom chooses to be irresponsible in his relations with others. As a result, there comes to exist a radical discrepancy between things as they were intended to be and

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<sup>18</sup>The Fall is purposely excluded because of the popular misconception which has too often interpreted Adam's sin as being sexual in nature. Modern Biblical scholarship has conclusively shown that such an interpretation is not tenable! Rather, original sin has to do with the wide discrepancy that exists between what now is and what was intended to be. It refers not to sin's origin but to the nature of sin and its universal presence.



things as they are. Consequently, laws arise out of the midst of man's abuse in order to protect the rights of others and preserve communal order. Thus, it is not surprising that Old Testament laws make man responsible for the consequences of his actions, for human sexuality is so rooted in the freedom of man as to be either an expression and bearer of life or an exploiter and manipulator of human vitality.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, one other Old Testament affirmation concerning the nature of man's sexuality emerges out of an examination of those laws established to regulate sexual abuse among the Hebrews. Basically they assert that because human sexuality affects the lives of other people, its personal expression must not take precedence over the welfare of the community. In other words, personal fulfillment of human sexuality must be accompanied by social responsibility.<sup>20</sup>

The New Testament has very little to say about the nature of human sexuality per se. Rather it proclaims that all men, regardless of whether they are male or female, are now called to become a part of a new age in which all things are subject to the power of God's love and the Kingdom of His reign. There is neither male nor female when man stands before God, for all are equally in need of redemption and through faith in Christ, all are equally

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<sup>19</sup> See von Rad's works on the Old Testament.

<sup>20</sup> See S. V. McCasland, "Man, Social Responsibilities," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), III p. 242.

heirs of the Father's unfailing grace. As such, every man, be he male or female, is to be treated accordingly.<sup>21</sup> Equal in sin but now equal in forgiveness and salvation, men and women are to become new creatures in Christ. Through the transforming power of God's grace, they are to leave sin behind and are to begin to live life as it was intended to be. Broken relationships are to be restored, and perverted ways made straight. In all spheres of life where man in his freedom has allowed sin to separate him from God, his fellowman, and his own nature and destiny as a child created in the image of the Father, man is to seek reconciliation and restoration. All of his relationships are now to reflect a concern for the welfare of others. Indeed, they are to be characterized by love, good will, respect, and responsibility. Thus, when applied to the nature of human sexuality, the New Testament's "gospel motif" first of all recognizes its perversion through man's sinful abuse of life as it was created by God, and secondly, in the new order of redemption, calls for the restoration of its true nature in the life of man through the transforming power of God's love. Only in a life of faith does human sexuality find the fullness of its true nature restored and its expression made manifest in the wholeness of life's reclamation.

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<sup>21</sup>The equality of male and female before God is a radical departure from practices and beliefs in New Testament times, but even Paul maintains this theological norm as shown in Helmut Thielicke, The Ethics of Sex (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

Because the Christian faith finds the definitive authority of its truths in the Holy Scripture, the Christian understanding of human sexuality can thus be summarized in the following Biblical affirmations: As a part of the created order, human sexuality is natural, normal, and good. It is a basic part of man's unified being, and is uniquely human in that it is relational as well as reproductive. When true to its nature, human sexuality is characterized by an inherent communal maturity, seeking personal fulfillment in social responsibility. Unfortunately, human freedom allows man's sexuality to become subject to the tragic distortions of his own sin. But even in its perversion, human sexuality can still be restored to the fullness of its created order by the redemptive power of God's love working in the hearts and lives of people through faith to deliver man from all that seeks to rob him from the wholeness of his humanity.<sup>22</sup> These affirmations reveal the Christian perspective and confirm the findings of logic, observation, and experience.

#### IV. PSYCHO-DYNAMIC DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

The seeds of human sexuality are planted at man's conception and germinate at the moment of his birth. Its roots are established in childhood and its physical manifestations thrust to the surface at puberty. Its foliage is nourished in adolescence

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<sup>22</sup>See the works of William G. Cole, Helmut Thielicke, and Otto Piper for interesting contrasts of scholastic Biblical interpretations of the subject under consideration.

and its buds developed in the spring of young adulthood. Consequently, the beauty of its flowers and the fullness of its fruitage are limited only by the adequacy of what comes before that which is always yet to be. Indeed, between the "given" of human sexuality and the maturity of its expression in responsible personal relatedness, there is a long span of time and what happens in between is of the utmost importance. Man's freedom allows him some control over this developmental process and even the Christian faith which emphatically insists upon the reality of sin's power over man does not deny the reality of man's freedom to alter that power through faith. Thus, in the midst of his human sexuality, man is still free --- free to choose --- free to determine to a certain extent his own actions and his own destiny as a sexual being. This, of course, does not deny the fact that man also must live in a world with other men who are also free. His decisions affect them and their decisions affect him. But even in the midst of other men of freedom where each individual may not be completely free to determine what comes his way from others, he is always free to determine what his attitude will be toward them and toward what happens to himself. That freedom can not be taken from him by any man or by any of life's eventualities. Man is free and in his freedom he may accept or reject what comes to him from nature or from other men. Thus, he is free to accept or to reject his human sexuality, but even in his self-awareness, he must at least acknowledge its presence before he can do either. Man's growth toward sexual maturity, therefore, is integrally bound up with and decisively related to his

self-awareness, his self-acceptance, his self-identity, and his self-expression. Because human sexuality is a "given" it affects what man (in his self-awareness) thinks other men think of him, regardless of whether his interpretations are realistic or not. In other words, according to the tenets of psychodynamics,<sup>23</sup> a man's formulated facts of self-awareness lead to self-acceptance or self-rejection, which in turn leads to the development of man's self-identity, which in turn is revealed in self-expression through various modes of behavior and communication. Thus, what a man says and does is determined by what a man comes to believe he really is. What a man really believes himself to be is determined by his appraisal of himself and his evaluation of what he believes others think of him, regardless of whether those appraisals and evaluations are in contact with things as they really are or not. This process begins at the moment of birth and grows in intensity, repeating itself in ever more complex and ever more compounded gyrations. Consequently, human sexuality, like a man's education and personality, is a continuous developmental process which must be constantly integrated into the whole context of man's being. As such, man in his freedom is able to reflect upon the nature of his human sexuality, to interpret its meaning, and to exercise self conscious control over its development and its behavioral expression. Thus, man's freedom takes command over the development of

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<sup>23</sup>This understanding of the psycho-dynamics of human freedom is taken from the works of Viktor Frankl and Albert Outler.

his human sexuality, instructs its mode and manner of expression, and allows it to rise to heights of perfection or to sink to depths of perversion heretofore unknown among any of the other creatures on earth. Therefore, the significance of man's freedom is found in its power to recognize, to orient, and to integrate sexuality into the whole context of what it means to be truly and fully human.

## V. DEFINITIVE CONCLUSIONS

Having emphasized, examined, and explicated these four imperative dimensions of human sexuality, what definitive conclusions can be made and what resumé of judgment can be formulated which will be most particularly helpful in our search for a functional definition? To be sure, our consideration of the natural dimensions certainly confirms the basic contention that human sexuality is one of life's constant factors. As a necessary part of the created order of man's humanity, it is one of the primordial structures of his existence. Included in the definition of what it means to be a man, it enters into the whole of man's life and qualifies all of his human relations and reactions. It is, in fact, an omnipresent reality making its impact upon all areas of human growth and development --- in infancy and childhood, in adolescence and young adulthood, in maturity and senescence. As such, its constant presence and influence must be reckoned as one of the most important constitutive elements in the life of man.

Our consideration of the social dimensions of human sexuality attempts to introduce, assert, and verify the mandatory relational character of man's sexual nature. Closely connected to man's ability to communicate, his capacity to love, his freedom to cooperate, and his need to relate his human sexuality is thus characterized by an innate incompleteness which manifests itself as an incessant drive toward complementary fulfillment. The implications of such an inherent complementarity in the foundational characteristics of man are of profound importance and merit the most extensive investigation. In fact, no contemporary consideration of the true nature of human sexuality is complete without careful contemplation and conscious reflection upon this existent reality.

Our emphasis upon and explication of the religious dimensions of human sexuality offers the only hope and sure basis for the emergence of a responsible and realistic sexual ethic. It, like all other aspects of life, is subject to the power of love and the distortion of sin. Thus human sexuality, if it is to be true to its definitive nature, must be put at the service of love where its proper expression and fulfillment reflects the common concern of all. As such human sexuality is but another realm where God is at work attempting to reveal the true meaning of love. Thereby, human sexuality is transformed into the celebration of that ultimate love of God which embraces all men.

Finally, our consideration of the psycho-dynamic dimensions of human sexuality affirms that the total life pattern and personal identity of man is present in the most transitory as

well as the most intimate of his human experiences. Consequently, there can be no question but that human sexuality, whether expressed or repressed, whether creative or destructive, is a qualifier of both identity and experience. As such human sexuality is an agent of that life force which forever prods man toward fuller personal development and greater maturity of expression.

Our consideration of these four dimensions of human sexuality which in the light of our present perspective we have termed "relevant" constitutes the basis upon which our functional definition of human sexuality will be built. As such it neither denies nor negates the probable existence and importance of other significant dimensions equally deserving of honest presentation and appraisal, but simply reflects that conscious selectivity and discrimination which the process of definition necessarily demands. It is on this process of definition that we now focus our attention.

## VI. THE FORMULATION OF AN INTEGRATED DEFINITION

The process of formulating a definition that is functional as well as comprehensive is always a difficult and highly complex matter. The necessity for maintaining a responsible sense of inner integrity among component parts is qualified by the necessity of maintaining an adequate sense of balance. Consequently, any truly functional definition must contain not only imperative considerations but also pragmatic qualifications. In other words, it must include that which is operational as well as that which is



theoretical. That which seeks to be included because it is essential to the essence of common understanding is an imperative consideration, while that which seeks definitive inclusion because it has proved to be true in the common experiences of man's life is a pragmatic qualification. Functional definition is dependent upon the emphasis of both. Because the imperative considerations involved in formulating a functional definition of human sexuality have already been set before us and are composed of the four dimensions examined in the previous chapter, our task here is to creatively integrate and inter-relate those dimensions into a unitive whole. What that actually means is that the essence of each dimension must be contained within the words of our functional definition and made implicit therein. Consequently, the natural dimensions of human sexuality must find implicit expression in words which affirm that the obligations and possibilities of human sexuality are present in the whole of man's life and must be regarded accordingly. In like manner, the social dimensions must be included in conscious recognition of the equality and the complementarity of male and female which alone can produce an enrichment of life in all areas of human existence and which alone comes from that unique contribution which each can make to the other. Likewise, if human sexuality is to remain true to its religious dimensions, our definition must also present a theological view of man's sexual existence which understands its place in life as being fulfilled by the love of God. And finally, in a similar manner, the psycho-dynamic dimensions of human sexuality which

confirm its internal linkage with all of the acts and experiences of the human self's constant becoming while affirming its freedom of choice and conscious capacity for direction therein must somehow be encompassed within the verbal limits of our definitive terminology. Thus, these four dimensions of human sexuality comprise those imperative considerations which must be kept in mind in our attempt to formulate a functional definition.

The pragmatic qualifications of definition with which we are concerned present themselves in such a way as to demand our attention, and because of their contemporary relevance and importance, cannot be neglected nor ignored without serious consequences. In fact, the formulation of a functional definition without taking them into account and careful consideration could render all efforts at extensive definition inadequate, unrealistic, inept, and nonfunctional. Basically then, pragmatic qualifications arise out of common experience and put existing definitions to the test, thereby determining the boundaries of their appropriate application. In other words, a functional definition, if it is to be adequate, must be able to deal responsibly with those exceptions and natural expansions of understanding which find their origin in the matrix of life. Herein, we have chosen to limit ourselves to the discussion and consideration of two pragmatic qualifications, the current significance and impact of which should in no way be taken lightly. The first concerns the relation of love to human

sexuality and the second concerns the rising increase in exceptions to the marital norm. The importance of both in the formulation of a functional definition of human sexuality should be obviously apparent.

How then, are love and human sexuality related? To be sure, the two are linked in the continuum of human experience for human sexuality often finds physical fulfillment in genital relationships which likewise, often are the physical consummation of human love. In a like manner, human love often finds its fullest physical expression in genital relationships of sexual consummation which likewise, are the fullest physical expressions of human sexuality. But in actual fact, neither is fulfilled in genital relationships alone. Thus, love and human sexuality can be related through genital expression but cannot be equated with it, nor with one another. The two are not one and the same. In other words, the presence and fulfillment of human love is not dependent upon genital relations, nor is the presence and fulfillment of human sexuality dependent thereon --- although physical sexual union certainly can lead to the fullest expressions of both when one places itself at the service of the other. Thus, we can conclude that human sexuality must be understood in terms of its contribution to the life of love, genital relations must be understood in terms of what they communicate, and human love must be understood in terms of relationships and their contents.

In regard to human sexuality's contribution to the life of love it must be remembered that man is a sexual being all of his life and as such, all of his relationships, to some degree or another, must be considered sexual. What makes his sexual relations truly human, however, is that transcendent self awareness which makes it possible for him to love --- to give freely of himself to another and to willingly receive and be responsible for that which another gives of himself in return. This being the case, it should be obviously apparent that it is only through the body that one self is able to communicate to another. Genital relations then, are one of the many non-verbal means of communication whereby men as sexual beings relate to one another. What man chooses to communicate through them is the measure not only of his love but also of his sexual maturity, for sexual relations without love are dehumanized. In other words, all expressions of sexuality must also be expressions of love if they are to be truly and fully human. Thus, sexual relationships of love which never find expression in genital relations but do reveal a deep level of self communication between one sexual being and another maybe sexually more human and more fulfilling than genital relations which do not communicate anything of the self beyond physical pleasure. Love, alone can make man's sexuality truly and fully human. Thus human sexuality must be placed at the service of love if it is to find maturity of expression and fulfillment of its true nature and purpose in the life of man.

The second pragmatic qualification is concerned with the rising increase in exceptions to the marital norm. In the past there has consistently been a high appraisal of sexual fulfillment within marriage, but very little understanding of sexuality in the life of persons for whom that condition, either by choice or by chance, is not a viable alternative. The church's response to that question and to a large extent society's response also, has been a radical combination of remedial repression and unacknowledged ignorance, the consequences of which have been atrocious to say the least. Based on the broad assumption that genital sexuality has no place or meaning outside of marriage, all other expressions were unsanctioned and condemned. There were no exceptions and it was assumed that all of the problems of human sexuality could be solved simply by placing them within the context of marriage and that nothing else need be understood. Needless to say, it is not hard, thus to conclude that any sexual ethic which offers only the prohibition of overt sexual behavior except under certain regulated circumstances, is woefully incomplete.<sup>24</sup> This is primarily because it never asks the question as to what is the true meaning of human sexuality in human existence. Today that question is being asked in every increasing numbers. Why should all genital expressions of human sexuality be limited only to those who are married or only to those of the opposite sex? Cannot one enter into genital relations simply on the terms of mutual agreement? Thus, while such questions still reveal an

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<sup>24</sup>Williams, op. cit., p. 221.

extremely limited biophysical understanding of human sexuality, the rising increase in exceptions to the marital norm has basically taken the form of pre-marital relations, extra-marital relations, communal relations, and homosexual relations. Such relations, in certain instances have been found to be very meaningful and in a dramatic way, raise again the whole question of what does it mean to be sexually responsible. Understandably, some persons choose to enter into such relations freely, but others have no choice at all, for they are ones to whom life has brought unwanted and difficult circumstances --- ones who desire the companionship of marriage but are denied it --- ones for whom physical or psychological illness has made normal sexual relations impossible --- ones who have had tragic personal experiences which they must find some meaningful way to resolve. In any case, these exceptions, whether freely chosen or reluctantly assumed, pose serious questions for the formulation of a functional definition of human sexuality. Such questions as: What is normal and what is normative in genital expressions of human sexuality, and what, if anything, does the context of marriage add? A conscious recognition of these questions and of the problems to which they point is of imperative importance, and without that recognition any definition of human sexuality will prove to be inadequate and incomplete.

With these pragmatic qualifications in mind then, and specific imperative considerations close at hand, we turn now to the formulation of a functional definition of human sexuality.

Inter-relational in character and content, unitive in purpose, and comprehensive in intent, our definition is as follows:

Human sexuality, in both its given and developmental forms, is a catalyst in the totality of man's growth and development in life, functioning as an ever expanding personal dynamism whose purpose is to express through all of the creative processes of life, the truly corporate nature of human existence, and whose mature expression emerges in the midst of human freedom<sup>25</sup> as an unswerving determination to become and to remain fully human, as a relentless refusal to be denatured, and as a constant celebration of life's fulfillment in love.

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<sup>25</sup> According to the New Testament understanding, this freedom comes only through faith. See J. Marsh, "Human freedom and Christian Liberty," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), III p. 122.

## CHAPTER V

### FUNCTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INTEGRATED DEFINITION IN HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Having attempted to formulate a responsible definition of human sexuality, we must now test its functional application and examine its practical implications. Our definition asserts that sexuality, like knowledge and personality, is a conscious and continuous development in the life of man, and likewise may be analyzed through science as well as self-awareness. In other words, human "sexuality constitutes the red thread along which we discern the problems and the promise of personal growth."<sup>1</sup> As such, human sexuality is not an autonomous cycle but is internally linked with the whole active, creative, and cognitive being of man. "Its energies, psychic qualities, disturbances, and affective tones (may) modify, alter, enrich, or debase everything in experience."<sup>2</sup> Thus, our definition affirms the belief that human sexuality is somehow integrally connected to the never ending process of the self's becoming --- that it is intimately related to the life cycle of man, and therefore, has profound implications for his growth and personal development.

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<sup>1</sup>Hans F. Hofmann, Sex Incorporated (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel Day Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 220.



Just as in animate nature there is an inward propulsion to grow, such that plant and animal follow certain cycles of growth, so in the human being there is likewise a comparable kind of inward compulsion to pass through certain stages of growth as he moves toward a more complete fulfillment of life. Each stage of growth of course, has its own characteristics and brings its own challenges and its own compulsive demands which confront man and require of him a decision. In principle, three ways are open to him. He may go forward and grow beyond to the next stage; he may stay where he now is; or he may regress to an earlier stage of his development. That compulsive intentionality which follows the general flow of human existence encourages man to go forward and to progress from one stage to another. Consequently, man's life is a pilgrimage of constant change, which begins the moment he emerges from the womb and does not cease until he is encompassed in the folds of death. However, each stage that man lives through in such a way as to meet adequately the demands it lays upon him, leaves behind, as it were, a deposit of growth which becomes an asset and a resource with which to meet the challenges of each stage that is yet to come. In a similar manner, each stage in which man fails to meet adequately those demands which it lays upon him, leaves behind a deposit of weakness in the foundation of his life, which thereafter constantly thwarts or limits that fulfillment which he might have otherwise attained. Thus, man must master the challenges of the present moment for his future's sake. It is the contention of our definition that human sexuality provides him with the resources to do so.

There is, of course, a long span of time between the givenness of human sexuality at birth and the maturity of its expression in responsible personal relatedness; and what happens in between is terribly important. Needless to say, it is almost impossible to discern what cancels out, or nullifies, or counteracts, or activates what! But if, human sexuality attempts to integrate the manifold components and aspects of man into a unified whole and ever points him toward the future, as our definition contends that it does, then its expressions may provide us with a means of measuring the maturity and well being of the individual at any particular stage of his life's development. As such, it becomes an agent of the central life thrust which compels each man to move toward a fuller fulfillment of personal maturity which is not limited to any one age or period of life. We turn then, to a brief examination of the human life cycle and to those foundational aspects of growth which each stage of man's life brings, and to a consideration of what part human sexuality as we have defined it, plays therein.

## I. INFANCY

The first stage of life, of course, is infancy which begins at birth and, somewhere in between the third and fourth year, merges into childhood. The major task which confronts the child at this stage is that of individuation or becoming an individual. Perhaps, needless to say, an infant is not born into a vacuum but

rather into a world of people and things. Consequently, he must discover not only himself but also how he fits into the scheme of all that is. He must discover what is to be his relation to persons, to things, and to self. In the first act of this drama of discovery the three principal actors are the mother, the father and the child. The infant emerges into what is to him an undifferentiated mass of being and he must learn to distinguish between persons and things. His primary need is that of learning to relate to persons, and his secondary need is that of learning to relate to things. How this second need develops, however, is deeply influenced by the way in which the primary need is first met. The infant makes his first beginnings in what will become a vast ocean of human relationships by means of his relation to that person who is closest to him and on whom he is most dependent for affection, food, comfort, and security. That person is usually his mother, but he encounters her now not as a part of her body but as somehow separate and apart from her, yet still very much dependent upon her presence and her care and her concern.

In this discovery of persons the child is more closely related to its mother, but the love of the father is also important, not only indirectly through the mother but also in physical contacts with the child. Through the sense of touch alone, muscle tone, skin texture and hair tell the child that there are two great classes of personal beings, each radically different from the other but somehow complementary --- and, most important of all, that he is loved by both.

The infant likewise, from the very beginning of his life is confronted with a world of things and through his senses of touch, and taste, and sight, he quickly comes to know the difference between things and persons. If his need for personal relatedness is met first, he soon learns that things are to be used and persons are to be loved, but if that first need is not sufficiently satisfied, he tends to confuse the two as he seeks to find some substitute to compensate for his need for personal relatedness. He thus, seeks external security in order to fill the vacancy in his deep need for inner security.

In a manner similar to the infant's discovery of persons and things, the infant also comes to discover his own body. He discovers the difference between its various parts and he comes to know that each part functions differently from the others. He comes to accept and appreciate each part for what it is and for what it can do, in accordance with his parents' acceptance and appreciation of the same. For that reason parental attitudes toward an infant's genital organs and their relation to necessary diaper changes and toilet training are of the utmost importance. If the child comes to think of that part of his body as being nasty or unacceptable to either of his parents, profound guilt problems may result. The infant needs to know that his body is acceptable and that his genital organs are a wholesome part of that acceptance.

Here it is important to note that during these first three years of infancy parental maturity and adequacy are terribly important factors in the life of the child, for the solutions which are

found in this first stage of life become the foundational basis from which other solutions in later stages will be found. Thus, one's life becomes like a never ending algebraic equation wherein each successive step is dependent upon the steps which precede it. Parental adequacy will be dealt with under the challenges inherent in the stage of human growth and development called parenthood, but here let us simply say that parental adequacy is dependent upon the solutions to the problems of their own growth which both the mother and the father were able to achieve up to the time of their marriage as well as upon the quality and nature of their mutual interaction therein and thereafter.

Thus the infant is, as it were, born into the confluence of two great and long streams of character, streams which have flowed down from the remote past into today, streams which have now flowed together in marriage. And now this new joint stream awaits the infant, takes him into its own existence, and carries him forward into his own existence.<sup>3</sup>

Parental adequacy, therefore is terribly important, for there must be a "we" before there can be an "I", who knows how to relate to persons, to things and to himself.

In this first stage of the drama of life three important foundations are begun to be laid as a basis on which all later stages of development will be raised --- the fulfillment of all three of which is dependent, to a large extent upon parental adequacy.

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<sup>3</sup>Lewis J. Sherrill, The Struggle of the Soul (New York: Macmillan, 1951), p. 44.

First, the infant, in learning to relate to his parents has already begun to learn how to relate to persons on an emotional level so deep as to permit his own deepest needs to be met from the very start of life. This Erikson calls the foundation of basic trust. Second, having received from his parents this genuine out going, uninterrupted love, from the very beginning of his life, the infant is not put under the necessity of finding substitutes for it in things. He can then make things his servant and not his master. He can use things as means to chosen ends, and does not have to make things ends in themselves. Thus, his primary security is in personal relations and not in things themselves.<sup>4</sup> Third, through the acceptance and affirmation of his parents, the infant learns to accept himself. He accepts his body and comes to understand and to affirm his genital sexuality as a part of a wholesome totality of what he is. Thus, in this stage of a person's life, human sexuality expresses itself in parental adequacy which in turn directly and indirectly leads to acceptance of the body and affirmation of the self. It serves as that unique link which unites intimacy and identity.

Perhaps, negatively it needs to be pointed out here that when parental adequacy is not sufficient for the demands placed upon it in this stage of life, the effects upon the infant have tragic consequences. It becomes far more difficult and in some cases impossible for this person, first in infancy and then in the years thereafter, to relate easily and deeply to other persons. Always on

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

guard against getting close to others or letting others get close to him, he wants to love and yet is afraid to love deeply. Consequently, his life may be characterized by an insatiable hunger for love which can never be satisfied because of his lack of trust. In other cases, he may turn to the love of things and thereby try to compensate for his need and his loss, and in so doing, he may come to treat people accordingly. In other cases, this basic distrust expresses itself in open hostility which is nothing less than a destructive way of dealing with his inner suffering. Or finally, and perhaps most tragic of all, if from the outset of life an infant is unable to establish a meaningful relationship with the world of persons or the world of things he may turn to the only world left open to him --- the world of himself. These negative reactions, of course, are tragic, and they happen more often than we should ever like to admit. Their presence among us however confirms the contention of this dissertation and its definition, namely that love and human sexuality are integrally related.<sup>5</sup>

## II. CHILDHOOD

The second stage of growth in the human life cycle is that of childhood. Most authorities in human growth and development mark its beginning at the mastery of verbal communications, others at the mastery of toilet training, but regardless of where we locate its beginning, the advent of puberty definitely marks its

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<sup>5</sup> See the explanation of this stage of life in Ibid.

end. The tasks of childhood are of a three fold character, and the drama of this stage consequently has three acts. The first act concerns itself with sexual identification and confirmation, the second with the development of a conscience, and the third act with relating to the world of persons and things beyond the family. In the first act of this drama, the child becomes aware of the difference that exists between men and women. In his infancy he was to some extent aware of a difference between his mother and his father but he found security in being loved by both. With the coming of his toilet training, however, he becomes aware of the physical distinctions of the have's and the have not's, and that the world of persons which confronts him is a world of both male and female. With this discovery the male child fears the rejection of the mother because of his sexual difference, and his ability to associate himself with the father is terribly important. In a similar way, the female child upon her discovery of her physical sexual difference feels to some extent deprived or inferior and finds confidence in her identification with her mother. The real problem then becomes one of how to relate to the parent of the opposite sex. That is basically learned from the child's observation of the parents themselves and how they relate, interact, and complement each other.

The child's first awakening to sexuality --- his own and his parents' --- accompanies his first awakening to himself as a person, existing as a person in relation to others, and above all, to his parents as having their own relation to one another. He begins to realize that



he is not the center of his mother's or father's universe at the same time as he begins to realize his need for their love and the difference between his parents as man and woman. In normal development he identifies himself at this stage with his father (and a girl does with her mother) and, being securely loved by both of his parents, he begins to venture out of infantile self-centeredness toward other persons.<sup>6</sup>

In this parental acceptance and affirmation of him and of one another, the boy is able to relate on a deep satisfying, constructive basis with his father, and the girl with her mother, while both seek to relate to the parent of the opposite sex at a level beyond that of infancy. Acceptance in the midst of this deeply felt difference and confirmation of one's uniqueness in being different provide a strong foundation for satisfying relations to members of the opposite sex in later stages of life. If, however, the child for some reason is unable to find a meaningful relation with and positive confirmation from the parent of the opposite sex, he may have serious difficulties in relating in later life with anyone who is sexually different. In fact, some psychologists see this as one of the constituting factors in the development of homosexual tendencies, i.e. (for through fear of rejection one cannot reveal himself to another except of the same likeness.)

The fact that the child learns to relate to the opposite sex from how his parents relate to one another again emphasizes

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<sup>6</sup> John J. and Mary P. Ryan, Love and Sexuality (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 46.

the importance of parental adequacy. If there is a deeply disturbing relationship between the parents, the child consciously or subconsciously, tends to relate his parents' trouble to their sexual differentiation. Consequently, he seeks to avoid such relations, lest they lead to a reoccurrence of that conflict and unhappiness of his early introduction to the meaning of human sexuality. Thus, parents in this stage, as in all others, must grow both in the maturity of their love for each other and in the love of their child, for each must be able as the need arises to release the child from a closeness which is a necessity of growth and yet becomes a prison if too prolonged.

When the drama cannot be lived through and is frozen at some intermediate point, either parent may begin subtly to dominate son or daughter emotionally in a dominance-dependency relation from which the child can release himself later only with great suffering if at all.<sup>7</sup>

Thus we conclude that at this stage of life the child seeks to identify with the parent of the same sex and thereby learns to relate to the parent of the opposite sex by observations and participation in his parents' interrelatedness. In this relatedness the child encounters and absorbs only what his parents are able to freely give to him and to one another.

The second act of the drama of childhood is concerned with the development of conscience and while this task of development is connected with human sexuality in expressions of guilt,

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<sup>7</sup>Sherrill, op. cit., p. 59-60.

that connection is more indirect than immediate. Consequently we do not focus our attention upon it but rather point out that because the infant couples an almost non-existent self-awareness with a practically uncensored self-expression he learns to distinguish between self-awareness and self-expression. The development of conscience is somehow integral and interwoven into the acceptance or rejection of that distinction.

In the third act of the drama of childhood, the child encounters the world of persons and things outside his own family in which he must learn to relate to those persons of his own age, his own sex, of the opposite sex, and to those persons who exercise some kind of control and authority over him. What has happened before this time and how well the child has progressed through prior challenges either prepares him for that which now confronts him or impairs his ability to cope with it. The child who has lived through the earlier acts and stages of his life comparatively well is capable of relating to other persons with relative ease and confidence. Having been able to relate well with his parents, he knows who he is and feels confident of his acceptance both with his peers and with those adults who exercise some authority over him. Thus, the emotional life of the individual as infant and as child now determines the kind of authority to which he is able to respond and subsequently make his own. If, however, the child comes out of the earlier acts of his life's drama with unsolved problems in his relations with either or both parents, he enters this act handicapped for the world of wider relations now open to him.

If he feels insecure and threatened, that insecurity increases and he must find some retreat in his relations with other children and with persons of authority. This insecurity may take many forms, being expressed one time in dominance, another in conflict, and yet another in morbid dependence.

Because the child achieves his own sexual identity only in reference to some image of the opposite sex, he now seeks to relate to others in the same manner and on the same level which he has found some sense of resolution to this important issue. Thus, his human sexuality dominates his interpersonal relations whether he is conscious of it or not, and consequently, he must now learn to incorporate his sexual nature and identity into the whole orbit of his social interactions and into his total self identity and self-awareness, for it is the key which, throughout his life, will unlock the door to true human community and interpersonal communion. This period of development is often called the time of latent sexuality --- a time when the physical powers and pressures are at low ebb but in which the psycho-social and interrelational factors of human sexuality are profoundly active. Because one matures only to the extent that he realistically becomes aware of himself and his relatedness to others in this stage of human growth and development, human sexuality focuses its inner energies upon the discovery of meaningful ways to express oneself in relation to others. Thus, what is most important then, at this stage of development in terms of one's later attitudes toward his own sexuality is how well he can bring together what he thought himself to be at

home and what he finds himself to be in the free-for-all of his own age group.

Since his sexuality will later on bridge the gap between what he believes himself to be when alone and what he becomes for and with another, the latency phase is potentially very significant.<sup>8</sup>

Near the end of this period of development, in preparation for puberty, the child again seeks solace and security in members of his own sex and others are adamantly excluded (with the noted exception of the child's parental opposite). Thus, human sexuality here as before, again proves to be a catalyst in the life of man, forever compelling him to seek fuller maturity in his interrelatedness, revealing the development of one's past, expressing its self in the present moment, but always pointing beyond toward the hope and the promise of the future in careful preparation for that which is yet to come!<sup>9</sup>

### III. ADOLESCENCE

Puberty marks the end of childhood's dreams of development and ushers in the traumatic age of adolescence. Characterized by a diversity of changes in physical growth, genital maturation, and social awareness, this stage of development confronts the

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<sup>8</sup>Hoffman, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>9</sup>For a definitive presentation of this perspective see studies produced by the Gesell Institute of Child Development.

individual with (at least) three central concerns: identity, exposure, and perspective. In a very real sense, all three of these concerns are integrally related to the dominant experience of puberty, the emergence of physical sexuality which essentially overruns and pervades all other attitudes and considerations. Consequently, the individual must again come to terms with his own body and his own identity. Long before adolescence, the child has become aware of the sexual distinction between men and women but now understanding his own unique sexual distinction becomes of crucial importance. He must now decide how the physical is to be linked with the relational.

Involved at this point is more than anatomical comparisons, physical agility, taste in attire, and the ability to interact verbally with the peer group. A crucial<sup>10</sup> ability to confront and be confronted is at stake.

Intensely aware of persons of the opposite sex outside of him and of the radical difference that separates him from them, the adolescent at first seeks solace, acceptance, and affirmation from persons of his own sex who share with him the same pressing problems. In like manner, the young adolescent turns again toward the most basic source of acceptance and affirmation that he knows --- his parents. But remarkably, this is where the first tension also develops in his attempt to relate to members of the opposite sex. The adolescent girl seeks physical affirmation and acceptance from

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<sup>10</sup>Hofmann, op. cit., p. 71.

her father, and in so doing the mother is seen as rival; and in a similar manner, the adolescent boy seeks physical affirmation and acceptance from his mother, and his father becomes the rival. This stage is commonly called the Oedipal period, and it lasts until experiences of what is popularly referred to as "puppy love" reorient the adolescent into the larger world of interpersonal relationships.

During this time it is important to note that the adolescent often retreats into a world of fantasy wherein he acts out his interpersonal sexual relations through masturbation. However, as his fantasies are replaced with viable opportunities for interpersonal interaction the frequency of his need to masturbate decreases. These opportunities generally present and express themselves in the adolescent's desire and his need for dating. In fact, it is through his dating experiences that the adolescent learns to incorporate his physical sexual expressions into responsible as well as meaningful human interaction. Thus, as the adolescent begins to realistically identify with the possibility for full human interaction among persons of the opposite sex, he comes to see his physical sexuality as a vehicle through which he can combine a free and confident giving of himself with a sensitive awareness of what he can be with and for another person in intimate personal exchange. In this sense, identity, exposure, and perspective are all interrelated as they complement and reinforce one another in their functional attempts to help the adolescent become sensitive enough to recognize his own uniqueness and confident enough to express himself spontaneously in his relations with the opposite sex. Thus the

functional significance of dating in the age of adolescence is that it exposes the individuals involved to a wide variety of differing relationships while allowing them to discover how much and with whom they can be themselves, and at what level and on what basis are they willing and able to get profoundly involved with another.

In this time of personal growth and development in which one must learn to incorporate his physical sexual expression into the whole orbit of his social interaction and into his total self-awareness the adolescent has the possibility of establishing a network of relationships and creative activities through which he is fulfilled in himself in and through participation with others. As such, his new physical potency and creativity can either unleash chaos or bring about constructive order and continual renewal. In that sense then, the age of adolescence is as much a search for perspective as it is for identity, both of which are gained through exposure. A person, of course enters adolescence with whatever solutions and whatever deficiencies he to date has assimilated in his relations to persons (especially his parents), in his relation to things, in his relations to himself, in his relation to his peers, in his relation to authority, judgment, and conscience, in his relation to members of the same sex, and in his relation to whatever response he has made to love.

All of these relations are brought to the test by the two great confrontations of adolescence, first in the world of persons of the opposite sex, and second, in the world of social consciousness and historical continuity. The first confrontation we have already attempted to deal with in the preceding paragraph. The second



confrontation challenges the adolescent to establish his place in the whole scheme of things --- to come to some understanding of the present in relation to the past and to the future and thereby to gain personal perspective. Nothing, perhaps, serves to remind him more of his relation to the long history of mankind than the physical changes that occur in his sexuality at puberty and in the succeeding age of adolescence. As a dynamic catalyst in the life of man encouraging him to grow toward maturity as a human person, the whole character of one's sexuality must now be observed and understood through the lens of a new dimension --- the physical. No longer is man's human sexuality simply communicative and expressive, but in adolescence, it also becomes procreative and reproductive. In that sense then, because of his sexuality, the adolescent comes to know that every man is an important link in the long chain of human history. Through his reproductive powers of his human sexuality the human species is maintained and the generations of mankind are united in the proceedings of the present. Physically, his human sexuality unites him with others not only socially but also historically. Consequently, from this time forward, whenever any of the physical expressions of his human sexuality are separated from an awareness of and a deep respect for their procreative powers and their place in the continuity of the human species, he inevitably denatures himself and the "humanness" of his sexuality.

The adolescent must also come to view the physical manifestations of his human sexuality in terms of the totality of the human life cycle for this physical potency will not last forever, and it will not always be a prominent factor in his own human growth

and development. Just as there was a time when it was latent, so there will come a time when it will subside and fade from the forefront once again into the background of his personal existence and social interaction. The physical aspects of his human sexuality therefore, must be kept in their proper perspective.

Sexual intercourse is the way of procreation, and even where for reasons of natural circumstances or human intervention new life is not begotten, the act is never wholly separated from this meaning.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, the continuity of the species and the responsibilities of parenthood are implicit in every physical expression. In that sense, the possibility for distortion and abuse is a constant factor of his sexual reality.

In a similar manner he must keep the relational aspects of his human sexuality in focus, for if physical expressions are separated from their personal, relational bases, one's sexuality is dehumanized into animalistic instinct and desires. "Physical expressions of human sexuality far more than the simple fulfillment of a biological function, are tied to a knowledge of ourselves and others."<sup>12</sup> Unlike animals, people are not capable of a purely physical sexual relationship. All physical expressions of human sexuality involve persons and to engage in them without a personal sense of responsibility is degrading and destructive to both

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<sup>11</sup>Williams, op. cit., p. 226.

<sup>12</sup>Roger Mehl, Society and Love (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 156.

personalities involved. Thus, "To treat a person as though he were an animal or a thing is to violate not only his integrity but one's own as well."<sup>13</sup> In that sense then genital relationships without emotional involvement and commitment are dehumanized --- (less than human) --- so that any mutual agreement to use each other's genitals as physical stimulants for self gratification is a violation of human dignity and is potentially self-destructive. In other words "sex for sex's sake" or casual genital expression of one's human sexuality is not only artificial but also pathological, resulting in gross depersonalization of the persons involved. Thus, one's physical expressions of human sexuality must not degenerate into forces of depersonalization nor become merely mechanisms of release. They must be set in the total context of one's life. Otherwise physical sexual relations may unduly commit people to each other before they have found relatedness and mutual complementarity in other important areas of life. This is true whether such relations be sexual intercourse, heavy petting, or physical stimulation leading to orgasm.

The context of decision about physical sexual expressions then is set in the web of human relationships in which one lives so that whatever meaning and satisfaction it has for one partner must become evident and acceptable to the other. Sexual play without the deepening of personal understanding is a violation of the search for reality. It becomes the language of brutality or

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<sup>13</sup>William G. Cole, Sex in Christianity and Psycho-analysis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 297.

exploitation. It is often said that the woman is likely to suffer permanent emotional damage and that the sexual act has a more lasting effect in the woman's life than in the man's. This may be true but male callousness is as much a scar on the human spirit as the damage to the sensitivities of women. An exploitive sexual relationship stupifies the spirit and results in an insensitivity to the depth of personal interrelationships.<sup>14</sup> When that which is potentially very special is treated as something very common one runs the risk of eventually not ever being able to enter into more meaningful expressions (of that which has been perverted). In that sense, genital relations have the most profound of psychological implications for the totality of man's personality and identity, and psychoanalysis now recognizes promiscuous and superficial sexual behavior as a symptomatic expression of a disturbed personality. Popularity seeking, the need for a secure companion, dating insurance, the prestige value of sexual performance, the need for personal affirmation and love are all listed as possible motivational factors for such behavior but only rarely does one mention the need for physical satisfaction. Consequently, perverted physical expressions of one's human sexuality become symptomatic of a far deeper problem. If one has not successfully lived through the drama of infancy and the drama of childhood and enters adolescence with serious deficiencies in his personal development, he may find himself now confusing

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<sup>14</sup>Williams, op. cit., pp. 223, 237.

persons and things, or he may find himself compulsively drawn into genital relations because of his emotional starvation, for when a man is dying of thirst he will not hesitate to drink from a muddy stream. Not having experienced deep nor sufficient love in his earlier years, in adolescence he may substitute in its place variant forms of genital relatedness and become very promiscuous but incapable of making lasting commitments of love. If he has not adequately resolved his sexual identity, or established parental identification, or has not come to terms with his own body, he may now find the process of his human growth and development paralyzed so that he can relate only to persons of his own sexual likeness for fear of personal rejections (homosexuality). Or, if his relations with his parents and with things and with his peers have been so painful as to deny him any resolution at all, he may retreat into the world of himself (narcissism) there to live out his need for meaningful personal relationships in fantasy and masturbation in an attempt to compensate for what he does not have in the world of reality. If however, one enters adolescence having successfully worked through the dramas of infancy and childhood and their dilemmas, basic emotional security will provide for him a reservoir of inner resources on which he can rely in his active resolution of these problems which now confront him. Consequently, he will not have to bid for acceptance and affirmation in his sexual relations by offering self substitutes or material bargains. He will not have to self consciously calculate how much of himself he will have to give in order to get what he wants. He will not have to substitute physical gratification for expressions

of love. In that sense then, those deeply personal, complementary relationships which eventually lead to marriage and personal self fulfillment can be more than simple matters of accidental nearness. They can truly become expressions of human responsibility and human freedom.

That precisely is the major problem of adolescence --- how to humanize our physical expressions of human sexuality and bring them together within the area of human freedom and responsibility. Man, of course, has no choice about being sexual but he does have the freedom to determine how he will allow his human sexuality to come to expression physically. Man alone exercises a degree of self-conscious control over his sexual behavior. By deliberate choice, he can suppress certain tendencies and develop others. He can delay the immediate satisfaction and fulfillment of physical gratification in preference to a better and more complete fulfillment and consummation at a later time. He is able to forego an immediate good for a long term compensation, and that has always been a mark of his personal maturity. In that sense, then, a man matures only to the extent that he becomes aware of himself and his possibilities for further growth and development. But in that same regard, man is the master over how much he cares to know and to acknowledge about himself and his potentials in the future. Consequently, physical sexual relations are always oriented toward the future of the persons involved and toward their continued personal growth and human development in mutual complementarity and nurture. They have a history of personal relatedness out of which they emerge and a fulfillment in the future toward which they move. Historically

then genital expressions of human sexuality have been placed within the context of marriage in order to provide a suitable climate wherein the full power of man's sexual love might be released to more fully serve human life. Within its protection one is able to give himself fully and freely to the other, as together they enter a new stage of human growth and development and bring the age of adolescence to a close.

Ideally, the engagement period offers a man and a woman looking toward marriage an opportunity to investigate many avenues of human intercourse, communication, and inter communion before engaging in genital relations. Working through many stages of coming to know one another, while growing in affection and its expression, a couple's increasing physical intimacy and knowledge of one another should be paced so as to allow them to enter marriage at that time when their relationship is ready for sexual union and physical consummation. Persons need to share something of themselves and their own lives before they can responsibly share their bodies. Consequently, when one chooses to indulge in genital relations prior to the perfection of those interpersonal relations which nourish and sustain them and make possible their fullest expression and fulfillment, he runs the risk of short circuiting the whole system of what makes man's sexuality uniquely human. Thus,

Genital activity may help two individuals to use one another as anchors against regression; but mutual genital love faces toward the future and the community.

It works toward a division of labor in that life task which only two of the opposite sex can fulfill together: the synthesis of production, procreation, and recreation in the primary social unit of some family system.<sup>15</sup>

That system, we have traditionally called marriage and as the unconditional commitment of two people to the unpredictable venture of what they might become, it completes the physical, and the psychological separation of the individual from his parents and with its inception, adolescence ends and adulthood begins.<sup>16</sup>

In its application then, our definition of human sexuality in the age of adolescence remains both adequate and apropos. Set in a context of self-awareness and a realistic recognition of what has gone before in the human life cycle, human sexuality (as we have defined it) expresses itself in man's conscious evaluation and celebration of what now is, in anticipation and personal preparation of what is yet to come. Fed by a profound desire for unity and completeness, its essential relational character remains readily apparent yet its proper expression and ultimate fulfillment is always integrally related to a man's ability to love.

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<sup>15</sup>Erik H. Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis (New York: Norton, 1968), pp. 71-72.

<sup>16</sup>For a fuller explanation of human sexuality in adolescence see Ibid., Isadore Rubin and Lester Kirkendall Sex in the Adolescent Years (New York: Association Press, 1968).



#### IV. ADULTHOOD

We turn now to a consideration of human sexuality as it affects human growth and development after physical and genital maturation in that period of life commonly called adulthood. This period, of course, encompasses the major portion of a man's life and it, like every stage that precedes it, has major problems and challenges which must be faced and resolved if one is to continue to grow toward the full maturity of life. Generally speaking, adulthood is divided into three periods or stages of development, each of which is characterized by its own specific problems.

The first stage is young adulthood and its central concern is that of finding and maintaining one's basic identifications. Having been weaned from his parents, the young adult is confronted by the world of adult life, with all of its manifold responsibilities and he is called upon to take up his own economic and social roles and to bear his fair share of the load. The weight of these responsibilities, of course, is immense and can be overwhelming if one has not made proper preparation to assume them. Again, as in prior stages of human growth and development, one has been shaped by that which has preceded the present challenges, and in that sense one either rallies his reserves and rises to the occasion or he is smothered by the load. In cases of arrested human development, these responsibilities become so threatening that one loses heart for growing up and seeks to remain in a perennial state of adolescence. Because the central question that presents

itself in the midst of these responsibilities is: How can the individuality and the freedom that have thus far been achieved, now be maintained?, even the most mature of persons is radically challenged. Consequently, most persons find in marriage a reservoir of communal strength, and interpersonal support.<sup>17</sup> That is the task to which human sexuality in previous stages of human growth and development has been directing itself. Thus, if in the context of mutual respect and responsibility one is able to give himself fully and freely to another and accept the gift of the other in meaningful sexual union, such relations become a creative force in the lives of the persons thus committed so as to prepare them to meet and responsibly accept the vast challenges and tasks that this stage of life sets before them. In that sense, human sexuality confirms the past but it also presents its own challenge to the present in order to prepare one for the future. Consequently, the ability to sustain marriage is as much a test to the young adult as that involved in the ability to enter therein. Now man and woman are not only called upon to be lovers but also to be husband and wife. One's ability to enter marriage is

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<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that by choice or by chance many persons remain single. Some want the companionship of marriage but no opportunity presents itself. For others, physical or psychological illness makes this experience impossible; and some by deliberate and responsible choice, seek personal maturity and sexual fulfillment through other means. In a real sense, these persons actually must wed themselves to specific alternatives and allow the fruits of their labors to become the sons and daughters of their lives.

determined by his capacity to love adequately and to relate responsibly. Consequently, one's marriage is maintained, nourished, and sustained as one finds new and better ways to love and relate more fully.

Every person, of course, that enters marriage, enters with a varying capacity to love. As such, marriage is a fundamental acknowledgement of reciprocal belonging, but it in no way excludes sexual exploitation and abuse.

Sexual relations (genital) are quite insufficient to establish a stable relationship between a man and a woman, unless they are the privileged and intense expression of a broader and continuing exchange. Desire for the sexual act per se often becomes dominant to the degree that a broader sexual relationship has not been established.<sup>18</sup>

When severed from a married couple's total relational experience sexual intercourse degenerates into a repetitive stagnating routine which fulfills no significant function except the satisfaction of physical desire. As a most important means of non verbal communication, then, physical expressions of human sexuality must make a positive contribution to the life of love if they are to nourish and sustain the marital relationship.

Obviously then, the guarantee of full and satisfying genital relations is not suddenly granted through marriage. The ability and capacity to respond and to relate meaningfully to another is not imparted but is acquired; it is not given, it is developed. A couple must grow in their discovery of one another and must

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<sup>18</sup>Max Thurion, Marriage and Celibacy (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 29.

dedicate themselves to a continuous process of becoming. In that sense, the union of two bodies can find its fullest expression only in the union of two lives. Man must work at making his marriage grow and he must seek to make his genital relations constantly more meaningful. Consequently, one of the major tasks the young adult faces is how to make his marriage a continuous source of personal pleasure and strength. As a covenant of intimacy, marriage can be a life giving dynamism in the life of man which knows no limits to its growth in love.

But growth in love takes place primarily in and through the basic human realities of living together through the years, trying to become more loving in and through changing situations.<sup>19</sup>

To that extent physical expressions of human sexuality in marriage must seek to become a part of this growth in love, if they are to transform the lives of the persons involved and build up within them a deposit of inner resources which can be released in time of need.

Barely does one reach one level of becoming before he must begin to grapple with an understanding of what the next phase in life promises to bring and requires of him. In the case of young adulthood, that challenge comes in a call to parenthood --- a call which though implicit in every physical expression of human sexuality should come as a conscious decision to venture an expansion of one's love.

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<sup>19</sup>Ryan, op. cit., p. 148.

Parenthood is the natural result and complement of physical expressions of human sexuality. And, regardless of one's contraceptive mentality, one can never completely disassociate genital relations from this inherent implication. A child is the natural, normal extension of a couple's love for each other, and by a conscious expression of their love and a responsible act of planning, a child is conceived and becomes a part of their fellowship of love. Such deliberate planning is itself an act of love, not only toward the child that is yet to be in that it should be wanted, prepared for and eagerly awaited, but also toward mankind in that a crowded world's population explosion threatens the social order, the welfare, and the well being of all therein.

The experience of parenthood is normally one of the major crises of life for both the mother and the father. In the context of an enlarged giving of oneself the personal adequacy of each marital partner for life's most basic psychological function --- that of reproduction --- is brought into question. Both are confronted by a new life, a new demand for their love, and a new portion of personal responsibility. It is no small wonder then, that in the presence of new life each parent experiences deep feelings of personal insufficiency. Perhaps this is rightly so,

for under the spell of desire a man and a woman  
can physically procreate life in a matter of moments.  
But to give psychological birth to a new self and then

to wean that new self into responsible maturity is a matter of years as far as time is concerned; and emotionally it is a vastly prolonged "labor," a labor of love and pain, of joy and of tears.<sup>20</sup>

Parenthood is an exhaustive challenge, but those who willingly seek and accept its responsibilities find in its experiences one of life's richest energizers, and through it enter ever more deeply into the fulness of life. Thus, the paradox of love is found in the fact that the more one loves, the more one wants to love, and the more one is thereby enabled to love more fully. Hence, pregnancy, when accepted as a fulfillment of love, opens yet another stage in a couple's own personal growth and human development, promising to them new opportunities to love and new resources with which to love. In that sense, the blessing of parenthood is always a preparation for that which is yet to come. It, too, by its very nature points toward the future. Just as one's basic sexual nature provides for human community, and sexual intercourse, a basis for human love, so conception provides a basis for human hope. When recognized and planned accordingly, husband and wife are able to give a genuine, outgoing, uninterrupted love to each other in their preparation for the coming of their child and in the continuation of that relationship after his birth. In that sense, parental adequacy reveals the inner sense of confidence and security one feels about his own sexual identity and the quality of his relations with his chosen mate.

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<sup>20</sup> Sherrill, op. cit., p. 119.

Both the husband and wife, of course, are involved in the development of parental adequacy which expresses itself most maturely in the cultivation of a deep emotional acceptance of him after he is born. This readiness and this acceptance are first conveyed to the child in his earliest contacts with his mother, whose sufficiency as such is profoundly supported in the quality of the emotional relationship now existing between herself and her husband. But as with wife, so too with husband, for such relationships are also mutual and interdependent. Consequently, just as the infant in this first stage of the drama of his life now faces his own problem of individuation, even as his parents before him faced theirs, so too the parents now, with such adequacy as they have achieved before and after their marriage, begin to face their own problems of personal growth which these circumstances now require of them as lovers, as husband and wife, and as parents. Like the infant, however, who does not face the problem of individuation all at once, so the mother and father do not face their problems of parenthood all at once. Rather, the demands for parental growth face them anew at each level and at each stage of the child's own growth and human development. Thus, for all persons involved, infant, mother, and father, the drama of life is not only infinitely varied, but is also on an ever moving scale which each day confronts them all with fresh demands for growth.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 44-45.

To the extent that they all are able to trust, love and mutually support one another they will all be successful in their pilgrimage toward maturity, but to the extent that they become swamped in their own deficiencies and inadequacies, they will turn elsewhere and seek blindly to find substitutes to fill the vacancies of their own lives.

Parenthood, generally, does not find its conclusion nor its resolution nor its fulfillment in one child. As mother and father become more confident in their new roles and their new responsibilities, they may choose to continue to enlarge the circle of their love by bringing other children into the existence of their family fellowship. The advent of each additional child, of course, multiplies their parental responsibilities and also their familial resources, the adequacy of which is always based upon the ability and the willingness of each family member to love. And remarkably, in that respect, some families seem to have an infinite capacity for love, and as such their lives are full and their joy is complete.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Here, it is important that a word about the childless couple be said. Indeed a couple may choose to forego the fulfillment that goes with having children because they do not consider themselves capable of meeting the qualifications and responsibilities of parenthood, and that may be a responsible decision on their part. In other instances a couple, childless by choice or by circumstances, may decide to adopt children and thereby to establish a family of their own. The adoption of a child of course, requires the same personal preparation and growth of the parents as does a child born of a couple's own consummation and in the challenges and responsibilities that follow there are no significant differences. In any case, however, a childless couple needs to find and develop new channels of growth lest the springs of life and their love start to dry up.



Its difficult to decisively determine when the first stage of adulthood moves into the second or when young adulthood moves into the middle years. The transition seems to be so gradual that it can scarcely be pinpointed with any standard of accuracy. Quite broadly speaking, however, it first becomes evident to the person involved when his first child moves into the traumatic age of adolescence. The age of the parents' involved, of course varies from couple to couple, but the crises that compound the problem of parenthood after one child reaches puberty unite most parents in a common experience and reveal, perhaps for the first time, the startling fact that they have now reached the beginning of the middle years.<sup>23</sup>

The main concern of the middle years of adulthood is that of achieving a mature overview of life. One becomes aware of the fact that there is more to life than simply external evidences, and consequently, he begins to seek some means whereby he can establish some sense of unity and inter-relation between all that confronts him. Thus, he begins to develop a philosophy of life. This, of course, is the time when what in early years was viewed as potential now, to some extent, becomes actualization. In terms of responsibilities, occupational skills, and personal achievements, the individual begins to actualize his potential capacities. He begins to make important decisions which demand skill and insight, judgment and experience, training and knowledge --- decisions

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<sup>23</sup> For the single adult the awareness of middle age comes when the fruits of one's labors (in fact, their children) are called into question.

which affect and influence the lives of others as well as his own. In that sense, this is also the period when most persons encounter the dead ends of life with full awareness of their consequences. One must now come to terms with his own failures and his own limitations. Whereas in young adulthood time once seemed endless and everything pointed to the future, now one must come to terms with the past and the fact that one's future will some day come to an end. Thus, what one now is, becomes as important as what one hopes yet to be. Consequently, one begins to strive to relate maturely and responsibly to himself and to the whole of life. He attempts to reconcile any discrepancy that exists between his character and his expectations of life, and thereby to reach an inner sense of personal integrity.

In the midst of this inward striving to achieve wholeness and unity within the self while moving toward a meaningful philosophy of life, the degree of maturity of the individual is measured by his capacity to deal with unanticipated realities, to plumb their hidden depths, and to respond to them accordingly utilizing all of the resources available to him. One of these resources is his family and in its members he finds not only strength and support but a call for continual growth. In the middle years his children will grow to maturity and start families of their own; they will move out into the world to find their own places and to live their own lives. In that sense then, the middle years of life require of the adult, mature guidance and direction in his relations with his children and increasing acceptance and appreciation of them as persons, each unique in his own personal

needs and contributions. This requires of him an understanding of what each child needs in terms of his particular stage of human growth and development and an evaluation of how he can best respond. In most cases this means that a parent must be able to respond to a veritable host of differing demands all at the same time, --- those from his children in adolescence, those from his children in childhood and perhaps, also, those from his children in infancy. Their welfare and well being are his concern, and he is able to respond to their needs in accordance to the maturity of his own development both as a person and as part of a team.

These responsibilities, of course, are shared responsibilities and parental adequacy is no where more effectively determined than by how seriously a man and a woman take that mutual complementarity which binds their lives together. Thus, sexual intercourse during the middle years begins to turn away from its procreative emphasis and its power to extend the family circle, and becomes more and more a matter of mutual upbuilding, creating and releasing within each partner new sources of power with which to face the problems at hand. More than ever then, husband and wife come to appreciate one another as persons and to relate to one another accordingly. In that sense, their sexual relations become the fullest expression of their personhood and of their love for one another. As such, the source of the joy and the recreative delight that one experiences therein is to be found as much in the giving of the self as it is in the receiving of the other. Genital intercourse in this period of life thereby becomes

a mutual experience of being created anew in an integral relationship of inseparable union. To that extent, a couple's sexual complementarity pervades all areas of their lives and points beyond the physical to the personal in preparation for that which is to come. In that sense, Gibson Winter's description of marriage as a "covenant of intimacy" takes on its fullest meanings and surest implications. Basically, then we can conclude that during the middle years one's personal fulfillment becomes less dependent upon receiving love than upon the ability to give love away. Love is now an action expressed in terms of one's responsibility to and for others. As a consequence, the mature middle-aged adult learns to accept things and people the way they are and to appreciate them accordingly in the fullness of the present moment.

In the middle years, a couple also extends their interpersonal relationships beyond the realms of the immediate family. They open the circle of their companionship and seek to establish lasting friendships. Clubs and neighborhood fellowships become increasingly more important and personally supportive and fulfilling. The mature person, of course, is able to appropriately appreciate such relationships and to welcome the wholesome potentials for psycho-social complementarity among man and woman inherent therein. In that regard, friends become to the adult in the middle years an important source of personal growth and development, a reservoir of personal strength and support, and a fount of personal joy and satisfaction. Again in these relationships just as in the sexual relationships of the husband

and wife, the central focus is upon the personal and not upon the physical. That emphasis is terribly important, for the time is coming when the children of the family will mature and move out, and those days always come faster than one ever suspects.

Consequently, one's friends and one's mate become increasingly more important as the middle years come and go. In a similar manner the personal begins to take precedence over the physical and this is not by accident but is certainly by purpose and intent, for at menopause the decline of the physical marks the beginning of another stage in the life cycle of man --- a stage wherein human sexuality, as in young adulthood and in the middle years, will take the form of a never ceasing search for newer, more comprehensive, and more extensive ways of giving one's self more completely to those persons and tasks, to which one has made an ultimate commitment of life.<sup>24</sup>

Senescence begins at menopause and presents man with a profound challenge to begin to simplify his life and to begin the process of putting his house in order. As the first indication of one's entry therein, menopause signals the beginning of man's physical decline. In the mature, its coming heralds no great tragedy and creates no sense of panic, for it is seen as but a natural step in the progressive unfolding of what is meant to be. Man does not live forever. His future has an ending and it is

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<sup>24</sup>For more complete development and interesting contrasts, see Reuel Howe, The Creative Years (New York: Seabury Press, 1959), and Anne W. Simon, The New Years (New York: Knopf, 1968).

toward that ending that his life has always moved. But, by no means does the coming of senescence mark the end of one's personal growth and human development. Like all other stages which have preceeded it, senescence has its proper place in the life of man, and it presents its own tasks and its own challenges which must be met if one is to continue his growth toward maturity. In senescence, human sexuality, likewise, enters a new stage of development and while man always remains a sexual being, the need for physical expression once again recedes into the background of one's inter-personal relationships. From puberty to menopause the physical has been at the service of the personal and now how well one has utilized that power as a means to develop personalized ends becomes painfully obvious. Those years of physical potency were but steps of preparation for that time when the physical would gradually become of lesser and lesser importance.

At menopause that time comes, and the physical drops into the background as personhood emerges to the forefront. Sexual differentiation does not disappear but sexual complementarity moves toward perfection. In a sense then, the need for physical expressions of human sexuality is simply outgrown. The physical aspects become of minor significance so that in these later years of adult life, who one is, is far more important than what he looks like. Thus, when the physical has fulfilled its functional purpose in the process of human growth and development, it fades away and is replaced by a union of lives on a different level. Consequently, as paradoxical as it may seem, the success or failure one has

had incorporating the physical expressions of his human sexuality into the whole of one's relationships in life (particularly in marriage), finds its ultimate test of adequacy after the physical powers of precreation and edification are gone or at least have been significantly reduced.

As with many other aspects of human life, later life reveals to what degree a person has learned to broaden the significance of his sexual experience so as to incorporate it constructively into his total life-awareness.<sup>25</sup>

Consequently, if one has tended to major upon the physical aspects of human sexuality and has learned to participate in sexual activity only as a biological function apart from its personal dimensions, the facing of waning opportunities for sensual enjoyment and self gratification may create within him a real sense of loss, tragedy, or panic. In that regard, one always carries his old self into his new situation. As a result, in time of senescence, the basic formulae by which one has lived his life stand out with greater clarity; disguises and pretenses drop away; and the self more and more is stripped bare to be seen as it really is. If, on the other hand, one's physical expressions of human sexuality have been

contained within a web of profoundly satisfying human relations, then both the waxing and the waning of (genital) sexual capacity can be accepted as phases in the cycle of personal creativity.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Hofmann, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>26</sup>Sherrill, op. cit., p. 198.

In that event love has been contained within the physical expressions of one's sexuality but is infinitely wider, deeper, and more pervading. The physical aspects of human sexuality are of time and gradually subside but "love is eternal, rejoicing in the body of the beloved, yet not decaying with the decay of the body, nor dying with its physical death."<sup>27</sup> For persons who have found their basic security in persons and personal relationships, the physical has been more and more relegated to the margin of their lives and their selfhood has grown in maturity with the advance of age. To that extent, one is able to accept his age with affirmation and eagerly to immerse himself in that profound current of life which bears him forward to deeper seas and wider harbors! Senescence is but another challenge of life --- a time when continued personal growth in maturity remains essential --- a time when one celebrates what is, in preparation for what is yet to come. The seeds of one's life now begin to bear fruit, for good or for evil, and in that sense, senescence offers man one last chance for evaluation and reflection, for resolution, and reclamation, for reconciliation and redemption.

To accomplish that task all of the forces and powers of human sexuality are placed at man's disposal. Thus, in senescence the power of the physical is absorbed, as it were, into the inner reservoirs of the personal, enabling man to reach out for the fulfillment of life in love. In this age, as in all of the previous stages of human growth and development, the work of human sexuality is never done!

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.



In the first instance, the passing of the physical powers of one's human sexuality begun at menopause begins to flash unmistakable signals to inform the human person that the body has started its silent pathway of decline. Thus, how one responds to this crisis is terribly important for it is but the first of many that are yet to come. From this time forth what the body is able to do will dwindle and with each diminution of capacity one must make an appropriate accommodation. Therefore, how one masters this first crisis, for better or for worse, sets the pattern for what is to follow. In that regard, the passing of the physical powers of one's human sexuality points beyond itself toward that functional simplification which must occur in all areas of one's life.<sup>28</sup>

In the second instance, the passing of the physical powers of human sexuality points to a new depth of inter-personal relatedness, for if the central concern of the golden years of senescence is that of concentrating one's attention and one's energies upon the simplification and appreciation of life in all of its manifold aspects, relationships become the most important factors

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<sup>28</sup>One must come to terms with the simplification of his status for his value as a person can no longer be dependent upon what he can make or what he can produce or what he can buy or what he can do. The emphasis shifts from doing to being. The simplification of possessions must also be brought into personal reflection and consideration. What one has is not nearly so important as what one is, for selfhood is not essentially dependent on things. In that regard, there must become fewer and fewer things upon which one feels dependent and without which one feels deprived. Consequently, for personal as well as for practical reasons, one must separate himself from any obsession with things.

of life. Consequently, later life challenges people to enjoy one another in the fullness of love, for therein life finds its fullest meanings. This is particularly true of husband and wife for now they can let their intimate and loving knowledge of one another ripen into the enjoyment of life together. Husband and wife become intimate companions on the pilgrimage of life and their human sexuality finds its consummation in their continual delight in one another. So well have they come to know and commune with one another that sexual intercourse is no longer a matter of physical expression, it has become a living reality in every area of their lives. To that extent, all of the power of human sexuality, in this time of life, is focused upon the personal, and the physical becomes basically non-essential.

In that regard human sexuality performs its final task --- preparation for the inevitable separation of death.<sup>29</sup> And that day comes, and one is left as the last remaining leaf on a tree but now

the sloughing off of the superficial and the casual components of the self leaves, as it were, a . . . pure core which is essentially at home . . . with all sorts and conditions of persons; and at the same time it already feels at home in eternity since the self already knows its way in the midst of eternal values.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>For an interesting presentation of this concept see Marc Oraison The Human Mystery of Sexuality (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968).

<sup>30</sup>Sherrill, op. cit., p. 209.

Now to love is to live and to live is to love and somehow in the midst of one's loving one is united with his beloved and the work of human sexuality finds its completion.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

From perspective to definition to application, the logic of progression now moves toward conclusion and poses the question: What are the implications for ministry? Basically, this question implies a consideration of those areas of life where the Christian faith, using these understandings of human sexuality, can more effectively minister to the needs of modern man and assist him in his contemporary dilemma. Here, we limit ourselves to four important areas of concern: the educational, the pastoral, the social, and the theological.

#### I. EDUCATIONAL

The first implication that emerges out of this study is one regarding education and the clarification of its purpose and content. Education supposedly prepares man for life and assists him in his living by helping him make rational decisions based upon the knowledge of facts. When it comes to the subject of human sexuality, however, modern man's knowledge and understanding is woefully deficient and tragically incomplete. Consequently, one cannot adequately respond to that which he does not comprehend in fact nor in fancy. That absence is painfully apparent in the current chaos and confusion regarding the true nature of human

sexuality. Modern man has failed to grasp the complexity of this subject's essential character, and to that end he needs to spend time and effort in serious reflection, and contemplation. He needs to come to terms with the inner dynamics of his sexual nature and thereby come to an adequate comprehension of what it means to be sexually human. In most instances, public education at least attempts to deal with this subject in terms of physical facts and figures, but a clear understanding of human sexuality involves more than a recitation of the biological facts of human reproduction. In that respect, human sexuality, as one of the basic structures of human existence, belongs as much in the department of the humanities as it does in the department of the sciences. Indeed, it is one thing to know all that there is to know about the biological functions of human sexuality but quite another thing altogether to effectively integrate such insights into one's total self understanding. Thus, when the task of education is not as much a matter of attitudes as it is a matter of facts, human sexuality inevitably is understood only in terms of its physical manifestations and not as an inseparable part of the whole person. It encourages the separation of the physical from the personal; it isolates human sexuality to only a part of man's personal growth and development; and consequently, it significantly contributes to the denaturing of man and the dehumanizing of his sexual nature. In that regard, the Christian faith should insist that all courses in human sexuality be taught in terms of the meaningful fulfillment of the whole person in the total life cycle of man. As an influential factor in every

stage of human growth and development and in every relationship of life, human sexuality has a positive role to play in the life of every man. In that sense, then, any education that is responsible and adequate will not overlook the possibilities of sexual complementarity and mutual fulfillment inherent within the realm of the psycho-social as well as the bio-physical. To that end the Christian faith must direct its energies and dedicate its ministry.<sup>1</sup>

## II. PASTORAL

The second implication of this study's understanding of human sexuality concerns the pastoral opportunity that the Christian faith has to help man mature as a sexual being. Where education helps one to know what each stage of life may bring and what may be the cause of certain crises, the pastor and the church have the opportunity to help man work through each stage and each crisis of his life in a constructive, creative way. In this regard, most persons need to learn how to relate to one another more

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<sup>1</sup>The Christian faith must not limit its "sex" education program only to the adolescent and premarital years, but must include an appropriate course of study in its curriculum for all ages --- one which will focus upon the relational and attitudinal as being supportive of the reproductive and behavioral. The study developed by Dr. Sander M. Latts of the Family Life Department of the University of Minnesota is an excellent example of a total parish-oriented program. See also the study, Sex and the Whole Person developed by Southern California-Arizona Conference of The United Methodist Church.

meaningfully and more effectively. They need to know how to develop sexual means of communication and how to celebrate the joy and wholesomeness of their human bodies. Here, then, the Christian faith has an excellent opportunity to speak to the needs of people where they are, to help them use their self-awareness to develop better self understanding and to cultivate a deeper sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others. Unfortunately however, in the midst of extensive sensitivity group training and expanded sexual liberation, we are still confronted with an increasing occurrence of neuroses. In such instances, the big question is how to undo what has been destructively formed. At each stage of human growth and development one lives out the story of his past in his present responses and he may advance or regress accordingly. One is always in danger of not being able to move on to the next level of life or of not being able to make the next progressive step at the particular time in question. In that sense, all expressions which are termed "deviate" reflect a failure to master certain problems of the past or perhaps a retreat from the challenges of the present plateau. The problems are compounded, of course, in accordance with how long their solutions have been delayed, but if human sexuality is a dynamic force in the life of man whose creative powers and potential energies can be utilized to assist man in his pilgrimage toward maturity and fulfillment, then the pastoral task is one of assistance in that process of actualization. Fatalism here is rejected as elsewhere in the Christian faith, for in every stage of human

growth and development there is a way by which the iron grip of determinism can be broken and a means through which fate can become destiny. The individual man, as a dynamic self, although to some extent retained by the relationships out of which he comes, is not fixated past changing. His life pattern can always be reshaped and pointed toward maturity. When stunted by accident, choice, or disease, human growth still fights back for recovery and resumption of growth toward fulfillment. Thus, what we presently call abnormalities of sexual expression generally have their roots in the developmental and maturation processes of life and recognition of that fact is a progressive step toward some sort of constructive resolution.<sup>2</sup>

In that regard, sexual expression like other forms of human behavior reflects the health and maturity of the whole person. Consequently, to know that in the expressions of one's human sexuality, a man exposes his manner of being toward his past, toward himself, toward others, toward the world, and toward the future is one great assistance to the pastor as he attempts to organize the supportive ministry of the Christian faith around the needs of people and the crises they face in their human growth and development.

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<sup>2</sup>It seems important to note here that just as homosexuality may be an abnormal expression of the physical dimensions of human sexuality, so exploitation may be an abnormal expression of human sexuality in its social dimensions.



### III. THEOLOGICAL

The theological implications that emerge from this study of human sexuality in terms of ministry primarily focus upon living illustrations of the doctrine of sin and the doctrine of redemption. It becomes quite apparent when considering the problem of human sexuality that this is but another realm in the sphere of man's life where the power of sin has a profound effect. Its tragic consequences constrict, distort, and destroy the potentialities of a man's life and hold him in bondage to the past. The tragedy of that bondage, however, is not limited to what it does within the boundaries of one man's life alone, as tragic as that distortion may be; but rather, because man's life is inextricably bound to the life of others, he becomes a prolific source of distortion, exploitation, and perversion to many, and by his sin does he cause many of his brothers to fall. Here, then perhaps, as in no other expression of his life a man's sins are visited upon the second and the third generations. In that regard, this study most aptly demonstrates how one man's sin is linked to the sins of others and how it is also linked to the sins of the self. For better or for worse no man is free to choose to love or not to love --- that is a basic part of his human nature. He is free only to choose what he will love. That being the case, man, in his freedom, must make a choice, and unfortunately man too often chooses to love himself. Whatever else original sin may mean then, this confusion in the orientation of the central thrust of man's being is undoubtedly its fundamental manifestation.

Unfortunately, man's sexual relations too often reveal the tragedy of this basic mis-orientation of his life, in a perversion which encourages the self to violate its human essence and to return to an animalistic state of being. By its very nature human sexuality is relational in character and is oriented toward the fulfillment of self in interaction with others. In that regard, the nature of a man's sexual relations reveals the basic orientation of his life. Consequently, sexual exploitation is always a dramatic exposure of a man's idolatrous worship of himself. If then, the central thrust of man's life is to love, and if human sexuality is its principal actualization agent, sexual exploitation is a perversion of both. Thus the self centeredness of man's self love perverts and destroys the force of that agent whose very nature seeks to free him and whose basic aim seeks to make the love of others possible. Expressions of human sexuality therefore, are positive or negative --- constructive or destructive --- good or evil in accordance with their basic orientation toward the fulfillment of the love of the other or the satisfaction of the love of self.

Christians believe that the love of God as revealed in Christ frees man from the bondage of his self-centeredness and from the destruction of his love of self. In Him, then, man is set free and is empowered to love others, and in loving them to find the fulfillment of one's self. In other words the power of redemption is made effective precisely by loving and living so as to increase life in ourselves and in others. In that regard then, a man finds himself in giving himself to others in love, and that is

most responsibly expressed in a man's sexual relations where human love is not something apart from Christian love, but is human love empowered and enabled to perfect itself --- indeed, to become fully human by turning man's central life thrust away from self toward others. In one's expressions of human sexuality, therefore, the impact of the drama of salvation is most profoundly felt and this primary agent of the actualization of love is released to become a vital creative, source of new life in the service of love. At its best, or at its worst --- even in its most atrocious forms of exploitation and abuse --- it still points beyond itself, reminding man of his innate need to be related to others, while challenging him to find better ways to love. The task of the Christian faith and its ministry therefore, is to more effectively activate and utilize the redemptive powers of human sexuality in preparation for or in confirmation of God's redemption of man in love.

#### IV. SOCIAL

Theological implications often lead to social action. Consequently, the social implications for ministry which arise out of this study could be classified as moral theology just as correctly as social ethics. In either case, the primary concern which confronts us is still one that asks: What moral views and understandings does the Christian faith have the right to expect of others in our society and under what circumstances should they be

enforced through the enactment of civil law or legislation? This quite obviously is a most difficult question and one which is presently being widely discussed and debated. On the one hand, there are those who insist that because religion is a matter of personal choice Christians do not need the support of civil law in order to be faithful to their own beliefs and religious convictions. Therefore, they do not have the right to impose their moral views on other members of society. On the other hand, there are those who contend that because some persons refuse to respect the rights of others, legislation is necessary to protect all persons from exploitation and abuse, regardless of whether that exploitation takes the form of racial discrimination or sexual molestation. As such, the Christian faith should support legislation which defends and protects the common good. From this study it seems to be apparent that there are definite elements of truth in both positions. In that regard then, there needs to be a sharp distinction made between those actions that are essentially personal in their essence and in their influence and those which are social in character and affect the rights of others and the common good of all. Abuse in the first instance is sinful while abuse in the latter is both sinful and criminal. In that regard the Christian faith should support legislative action as a legitimate means of deterring and controlling abusive public behavior when it is to the common good of all.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>It should not interfere, however, with those actions of personal decisions which are exercised within the bounds of the private lives of responsible individuals. For a responsible analysis of personal considerations, see the statutory recommendations of the Wolfenden Report.

This does not necessarily call for the enactment and enforcement of laws which are punitive in character rather than rehabilitative. Our study confirms the belief that most acts of sexual perversion are in fact, symptoms of far deeper problems which imprisonment only aggravates. Society needs to take seriously not only the symptoms but also the causes of sexual abuse. In that regard many laws need to be revised and some understandings of psychological compulsion and rehabilitation incorporated into statutory concepts of justice.<sup>4</sup>

Because always included in the ethical test of any action is its consequences not only for the individual and his society but also for the whole world community, one particularly important issue is here given special attention and comment.

In the world today, with its mass hunger, the question of how much of the world's goods, food, and land should belong to any family, becomes very acute. Space has become a spiritual and moral issue. The ethical obligation to limit the size of<sup>5</sup> families arises from desperate human necessity.

An over-populated world faces disaster if its present rate of increase continues. Consequently, the regulation of the procreative function of human sexuality is no longer a private affair, it is a

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<sup>4</sup>Penalties for homosexual acts in the United States vary from one day in New York to life imprisonment in Nevada.

<sup>5</sup>Daniel Day Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 239.

social responsibility. In these instances and under these circumstances, the private actions of the individual must be made subordinate to the common good of all --- even if that subordination must come through legislative action. Thus, law imposes limits on personal expressions of human sexuality which have social consequences in order to protect the liberty and well being of others. To that extent law grows out of abuse and is negative and restrictive in its character. But there is also a positive function of law in matters of human sexuality, which fosters as well as protects the creation and maintenance of an orderly, constructive environment for the achievement of sexual maturity and personal fulfillment. Negatively, this entails protecting human sexuality against all principalities and powers that seek to dehumanize it, but positively, it also involves the necessity for so ordering and structuring life that a truly human existence becomes possible for all. In a society where public life is, to a large extent, still controlled by men, this really requires a total re-appraisal of those structures of society which fail to recognize and take seriously the psycho-social complementarity of the sexes. In that regard, many changes need to be made --- changes which will uphold the equality, the dignity, and the imperative complementarity of men and women and will protect the right of each to make its own unique contribution to the enrichment of life in every field of human endeavor.

Laws can be enacted and people thereby protected, populations controlled, and social structures altered but in most instances the physical expressions of human sexuality among adults still remain

personal and private affairs among consenting individuals. No law can or should regulate that behavior and consequently, the Christian faith must more and more come to understand that the norms of moral sexual behavior can be more persuasively expressed in terms of love rather than law. In such instances, the Christian faith cannot and should not impose its standards upon others.

The rules of monogamy, the proscription of sexual intercourse outside of marriage, the traditional rules of sexual restraint, are important for the Christian style of life. They are the guide lines which have protected precious human relationships against wilfull corruptions. But the Church and the Christian conscience cannot rely upon law alone. It is the personal intent of the expression and discipline of sex (genital) which counts for the life of love. . . . those concerned for traditional moral wisdom would do much better to affirm the high possibility of the life of faithful love.<sup>6</sup>

In that regard then, we need to find some positive disciplines of self protection and self restraint for the sake of love and a sounder basis for a sexual morality today than the uncritical repetition of the formulas of the past. Traditional Christian sexual norms and standards do not stand above history. They have arisen out of the drama of man's life as generations of Christian people have attempted to live faithfully in love through constantly changing social systems. For that very reason then, modern man must take seriously that wisdom which has emerged out of centuries of

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 237.

experience concerning sexual restraints for the sake of the full expression of love. At the same time, we must also remember that the context and the demands of love are different in each generation and each must respond in obedience accordingly. Therefore, what in the past was enforced by society and the churches largely through social pressure and legislative laws will now have to depend upon the integrity of informed personal decision and individual responsibility. We must now rely upon the positive forces of love instead of the negative forces of law, of devotion instead of dread, of faithfulness instead of fear. In that sense, then, perhaps we can take heart over the fact that sexual relations inside and outside of the traditional Christian norms are showing signs of becoming increasingly more person-centered and more love-oriented. From that perspective, we can thus conclude that in so far as sexual expression is turned into cruelty, cynical exploitation, or the destruction of others, it is evil, and in so far as it leads to personal regard, loving growth, and mutual respect, it is good. It is to the prevention of the former and to the promotion of the latter that the Christian faith must direct the forces of its social ministry.

## V. CONCLUSION

There is today the widespread belief that sexual gratification is the surest, the shortest, and the cheapest way to happiness, and regardless, of whatever else that belief may mean, it is at least a



positive indication that modern man still recognizes the potential powers inherent within his human sexuality. Thus, modern man is on a search --- looking for love and truth and seeking meaningful personal fulfillment through some functional definitive models of human sexuality. Countless contemporary alternatives, though they be fragmented and tragically incomplete, cry out in keen competition for man's attention, his acceptance, and his approval, and in the midst of these contradictory evidences, partial truths, and obvious distortions, adequate understanding and appropriate actions do not come easily. Yet, the church has thus far remained conspicuously silent and has not offered its assistance. It has retained its traditional stance and has not attempted to present any meaningful alternatives to the popular perversions of the present, and in its silence it has not so much revealed its incompetence as its unfaithfulness. The Christian faith has a message of good news to affirm and a positive perspective to proclaim, yet its message regarding human sexuality has remained essentially unchanged in the midst of a world which has lost sight of the positive potentials inherent within human sexuality. Consequently, modern man too often knows all that the Christian faith is against but knows too little of what it is for. Perhaps this is because the church's past regarding this subject has been a comedy of errors, and its present one more of negative compromise and begrudging accommodation than one of constructive creativity and joyful affirmation. The church has emphasized evil at the expense of proclaiming good and has majored upon human sexuality's negative capacity to wrought

destructive havoc while neglecting its potential powers for life and love. It has forgotten to accentuate the positive and that has been its tragic failure.

Perhaps one day the church shall outgrow this negative obsession with human sexuality and shall help man develop positive modes of sexual expression which will contribute to the maturation of the whole person. On that day the church's message will no longer be negative and restrictive but shall be positive and directive. Indeed it shall be a positive presentation and a joyous affirmation of the creative potentials and life-giving possibilities inherent within a human sexuality, liberated from the bondage of sin and self, redeemed and fulfilled in the service of love. It is toward that day that this dissertation faces and has sought to make some minor contribution toward the actualization of its coming.

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